



Arifureta Shokugyou de Sekai Saikyou [Japanese Web Novel]

Among the class transported to another world, Nagumo Hajime is an ordinary male student who didn't have ambition nor aspiration in life, and thus called "Incompetent" by his classmates.

The class was summoned to become heroes and save a country from destruction. Students of the class were blessed with cheat specifications and cool job class, however, it was not the case with Hajime, with his profession as a "Synergist", and his very mediocre stats.

"Synergist", to put it in another word was just artisan class. Being the weakest, he then falls to the depth of the abyss when he and his

classmates were exploring a dungeon. What did he find in the depth of the abyss, and can he survive?

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Info:

https://www.mangaupdates.com/series.html?id=113398

Raws:

http://ncode.syosetu.com/n8611bv/

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http://japtem.com/projects/arifureta-toc/

Changed to

https://durasama.wordpress.com/arifureta-chapters/

Chapter 97 to 98 by

https://elementalcobalt.wordpress.com/

NejiSpira
wuxiatranslationsdl.wordpress.com

Source URL: https://durasama.wordpress.com/arifureta-chapters/

Volumes/Arcs going by the Webnovel:

Arc 1: Chapter 0 – Chapter 26

Arc 2: Chapter 27 – Chapter 49

Arc 3: Chapter 50 – Chapter 81

Arc 4: Chapter 82 – Chapter 111

Arc 5: Chapter 112 – Chapter 121

Arc 6: Chapter 122 – Chapter 136

Arc 7: Chapter 137 – Chapter 153

Arc 8: Chapter 154 – ongoing

Table of Content:

From Japtem:

Chapter 0 : Prologue

Chapter 1 : Summoned to a Different World

Chapter 2 : Status Plate

Chapter 3 : Bullying the Weakest

Chapter 4 : A Chat Under the Moonlight

Chapter 5 : Trap

Chapter 6 : Behemoth

Chapter 7 : Wretched Malice

Chapter 8 : Abyss

Chapter 9 : Complete Change

Chapter 10 : Weapon Creation

Chapter 11 : Subjugation of an Arch-Nemesis

Chapter 12 : Despair and Decisions (Classmate Side 1)

Chapter 13 : Path of Escape

Chapter 14 : The Sealed Room in the Abyss

Chapter 15 : Cheater rather than a Hero

Chapter 16 : Demon of the Sealed Room

Chapter 17 : Chat at Ease

Chapter 18 : Second Nightmare (Classmate Side 2 Part I)

Chapter 19 : Beyond the Past (Classmate Side 2 Part II)

Chapter 20 : A Partner’s Abilities

Chapter 21 : The Guardian of the Depths

Chapter 22 : Abode of Traitors

Chapter 23 : True History

Chapter 24 : Departure

Chapter 25 : The Empire and the Heroes (Classmate Side 3 Part I)

Chapter 26 : The Empire and the Heroes (Classmate Side 3 Part II)

Chapter 27 : Raisen Grand Canyon and the Miserable Rabbit

Chapter 28 : Shia Haulia's Circumstances

Chapter 29 : Contract Completed

Chapter 30 : Haulia Tribe and Encounter

Chapter 31 : Empire's Soldiers

Chapter 32 : Shia's Feelings and Haltina, Sea of Trees

Chapter 33 : Haulia was Shameless as Expected

Chapter 34 : Elders' Conference

Chapter 35 : The Only Way to Survive

Chapter 36 : Shia, Grand Battle of One's Lifetime

Chapter 37 : Haulia's Sudden Change

Chapter 38 : Hajime's Failure

Chapter 39 : The Great Tree's Secret

Chapter 40 : In Brook Town I

Chapter 41 : In Brook Town II

Chapter 42 : In Brook Town III

Chapter 43 : Great Dungeon of Raisen?

Chapter 44 : Miledi Raisen I

Chapter 45 : Miledi Raisen II

Chapter 46 : Miledi Raisen III

Chapter 47 : The Person Inside the Golem

Chapter 48 : Raisen Great Dungeon and The Last Trial

Chapter 49 : You did well

Chapter 50 : Ai-chan's Bodyguards

Chapter 51 : Once Again, In Brook Town

Chapter 52 : Adventurer-like Work

Chapter 53 : Adventurers Guild, Fhu-ren Branch

Chapter 54 : Branch Head's Request

Chapter 55 : Reunion at Lakeside Town

Chapter 56 : Aiko's Worries

Chapter 57 : Northern Mountain Range Area

Chapter 58 : Black Dragon Subjugation?

Chapter 59 : Tio Clarce

Chapter 60 : Sensei's Talk

Chapter 61 : Goddess Advent?

Chapter 62 : Ul Town's Trampling Drama

Chapter 63 : Undesired Result

Chapter 64 : Inside the Returning Vehicle

Chapter 65 : Aiko Gone Mad

Chapter 66 : Once Again in Fhuren

Chapter 67 : Hajime becomes a Papa I

Chapter 68 : Hajime becomes a Papa II

Chapter 69 : Hajime becomes a Papa III

Chapter 70 : An Abnormal Situation

Chapter 71 : Versus Demon Race I

Chapter 72 : Versus Demon Race II

Chapter 73 : Even a Mob-character Has Things It Can Do

Chapter 74 : The Nostalgic Holad

Chapter 75 : To Accomplish One's Obligation

Chapter 76 : The Hero's Defeat

Chapter 77 : Accompanied By A Red Thunder

Chapter 78 : The Peerless Incompetent

Chapter 79 : The This and That After the Reunion

Chapter 80 : Declaration of War

Chapter 81 : Madness and Jealousy

Chapter 82 : Aiko's Disappearance

Chapter 83 : Immediate Trouble in the Great Desert

Chapter 84 : Dukedom of Ancadi

Chapter 85 : The Thing Lurking in the Oasis

Chapter 86 : Guryuu-en Great Volcano

Chapter 87 : The Last Trial is Easy?

Chapter 88 : The User of Age of Gods Magic

Chapter 89 : Inside the Scorching Heat

Chapter 90 : A Girl Fell From the Sky, the MC's Daughter in this Case

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Chapter 91 : Mother and Daughter's Reunion

Chapter 92 : Meljeene Bottom Sea Ruin

Chapter 93 : Inferiority Complex

Summaries from Chapter 93-99

Chapter 93

Chapter 94

Chapter 95

Chapter 96

Chapter 97

Chapter 98

Chapter 99

Translated Chapters 100-125 on Google Docs:

Chapter 100: The Apostle's Raid, and The Kings Capital is Invaded

Chapter 101: Matchless Shia

Chapter 102: Matchless Yue

Chapter 103: God's Apostle, Nointo

Chapter 104: The Angel That Fell

Chapter 105: God's Mountain

Chapter 106: Betrayal

Chapter 107: Light of Condemnation

Chapter 108: Later in the Kingdom

Chapter 109: Chatting Events of a Single Day -First-

Chapter 110: Chating Events of a Single Day -Second-

Chapter 111: Chatting Events of a Single Day -Third-

Chapter 112: Those guys once again

Chapter 113: Dere Period

Chapter 114: Imperial Capital

Chapter 115: Don't Fret, It's the Hauria

Chapter 116: Gung Ho Once Again

Chapter 117: Imperial Castle – Beginning

Chapter 118: Imperial Castle – Later

Chapter 119: Party of Welcome and Engagement

Chapter 120: Hauria VS. Emperor -First Part-

Chapter 121: Hauria VS. Emperor -Later-

Chapter 122: Character Introduction (Statusplates)

Chapter 123: Transporting the Demi-humans

Chapter 124: Night of Fair Bergen

Chapter 125: Imitation

Here starts my own translation:

Chapter 126: Even if the Appearance Changes

Chapter 127: The Pseudo-Trent

Chapter 128: Ideal World

Arifureta: Volume 1 Chapter 0

Prologue

In the darkness, the light quickly disappears. Even unconscious the hand reached out to grasp at nothing, while falling there was a sense of tightening in the nether region. Nagumo Hajime's face distorted with fear as the light disappeared from his vision.

Currently, Hajime was falling down a deep cliff that looked like the entrance to hell. The only light visible was the light that illuminated the ground above. As he continued to fall the light no longer reached him, the surrounding turned black, Hajime searched the dungeon, and on the cervices of the sides he saw a revolving lantern as the sound of wind passed by him.

Being a Japanese myself, the inequality that he tasted when he came to this world was too hard to represent in words and the hope that this fantasy world would rid of it, the current history of the misfortune that he tasted in progressive form.

* * *

Monday, the most melancholy of all the days has just started. For most people, at this time of the week would sigh, while the previous day would be heaven to them.

And Nagumo Hajime was not an exception to this notion. However, in Hajime's case, it was not just a simple bother, the cozy school was associated with a very bad feeling, probably because he was depressed. As always, when the last bell chimed at school, he opened the door to the classroom with his tired body from pulling an all-nighter.

At that moment, Hajime received glares and clicking of tongues from the majority of the male students in the classroom. The girls did not have a friendly expression either. It was fine if the people were indifferent, but there were those who had an expression of contempt directed at him.

Hajime tried to play it off as he headed to his seat, but there was always people who would mess with him every time.

"Hey Kimoota*! Did you play games all night again? Was it an eroge I wonder?"

"Uwa, gross. Staying up all night to play eroge is super disgusting."

What the heck do they find funny to guffaw at? The laughter came from Hiyama Daisuke. He is the leader of the students that pick on Hajime on a daily routine. The three next to him with the stupid laugh were Saito Yoshiki, Kondo Reiichi, and Nakano Shinji, these four were the ones that picked on Hajime the most frequently.

As Hiyama stated, Hajime was an otaku. Hajime's appearance and behavior was not that bad to be called Kimoota or to be ridiculed. His hair was trimmed short and he did not have bedhead hair. He

did not have an assertive personality but that did not mean he was anti-social, besides he clearly replied back to people. He was quiet, but he did not give off a feeling of creepiness. Hajime simply liked things like manga, light novels, games, and movies.

The criticism that otaku's receive from society is certainly strong, generally speaking the degree of ridicule varies but it never reaches open hostility. Yet, why does all the male students show unrestrained contempt and hostility?

The answer was a girl.

"Nagumo-kun, Good Morning! Almost late as usually, you should come earlier."

The girl walks up to Hajime as she is smiling. In this class, no wait this whole school, she is one of the few exceptions that treated Hajime friendly.

Her name was Shirasaki Kaori. She is known as one of the two goddesses of the school, popular among both male and female students and known for her very beautiful looks. Kaori had long glossy black hair that reached her waist, and large slightly weeping eyes that conveyed a sense of gentleness. She had a straight bridge nose that was small, and thin lips of Sakura colors arranged to perfection.

Always the girl with the endless smile, is very caring and has a strong sense of responsibility that often people, regardless of school year, rely on her help. She is always seen with a sincere expression

without any unpleasantness, that is why it is hard to believe she was just a high school student.

So, why does someone like Kaori treat Hajime so well? This has caused many sleepless nights for Hajime and the student body (He got average grades as a result), it was thought that it was because of Kaori's good nature that warranted the treatment.

Now, Hajime's class attitude should improve, if Kaori was dealing with an Ikemen than it would have been acceptable, unfortunately, Hajime was very ordinary, on hand his reputation for "a life of hobbies" did not see an improvement of the attitude against him. That such a person as Hajime can be so friendly with Kaori, the ordinary male students could not stand it. Often they think "Why is it only him?" The female students simply, because they believe Hajime is taking advantage of Kaori's kind nature, seem to be uncomfortable with him.

"Ah, Good Morning Shirasaki-san."

Uwa, is this Saki?! Is what he wanted to say, but he saw the glint of the eyes and just contorted his face in discomfort as he returned the greeting.

And Kaori just wore a joyful expression. Why does she have such an expression? Furthermore the glaze was so piercing that he could feel the flow of cold sweat. Hajime wondered every single time. Why does someone like Kaori, who is hailed as the most beautiful in the school, associate herself with him. In Hajime's eyes, there is just something about Kaori's nature that he did not think about yet.

However, he was not going to flatter himself thinking that it was romantic feelings. Hajime himself, had given up self-awareness in his pursuit of his hobbies. Because of his lack of self-awareness his looks were average and so was his athletic ability. So when you compared him to her, he was nowhere close to being good enough. Therefore, her attitude is a mystery.

Besides that, can you be a little more aware of the Saki storm brewing! I say in my innermost thoughts. If I had voiced it, I have no doubt that someone would take me behind the gym…

When I attempted to end the conversation there, three students got closer to us.

“Nagumo-kun, Good Morning. It’s troublesome every day.”

“Kaori, are you looking after him again? Really, Kaori is really kind.”

“For real, no matter what you say to this unmotivated guy, it won’t work.”

The name of the girl that greeted him, from the three, is Yaegashi Shizuku. Kaori’s best friend. Her trademark was her long black hair done in a ponytail. Her slightly slit eyes was sharp, but in the depths there is a feeling of softness, this gives her the impression of being cool rather than cold. She was tall for a girl at 172 cm, her posture and physique was very dignify and it was similar to how a samurai was.

In fact, her family is in ownership of a Kenjutsu dojo. Shizuku herself is a vetran of her family style. Since she was a child, she had never lost in a tournament. Currently she appears in magazines as the “Beautiful Swordwoman”, she even have some diehard fans.

The underclasswomen would call her “Onee-sama” because of their admiration.

Next, the one that spoke a little clumsily to Kaori was Amanogawa Kouki. Just like his name he was the perfect man, good looks, athletic, smart, and good personality. He had silky brown hair and gentle eyes. His body was toned and slender at about 180 cm. Kouki was nice to everyone and had a very strong sense of justice. Since he was small he attended the Yaegashi Kenjutsu dojo. Like Shizuku, he was a national level athlete. Shizuku and him are childhood friends. Dozens of girls have fallen for him, but he is always close to Kaori and Shizuku so the other girls are hesitant to confess their feelings. Still he is a very popular guy that gets confessed to at least twice a month from all over.

The last person was a male with a very reckless feeling named Sakagami Ryutaro, Kouki’s best friend. He is muscle brain that does not care about the finer details in things. His physique is like a bear and he stand tall at about 190 cm. The eyes he has shows playfulness and sharpness. Ryutaro is a very hot blooded individuals that like others that put in effort like him, he does not like Hajime because of his lackluster approach to life. Even now, he choose to ignore Hajime.

“Ohayo, Yaegashi-san, Tennokawa-kun, Sakagami-kun. Haha, Maa, there is no helping it since it’s my own fault.”

To their greetings, Hajime just gives a bitter smile. “Teme, What selfish words did you say to Yaegashi-san? Aaa?” I wanted to say but a stare stopped me*. Both the girls were very popular, Shizuku’s reputation would not lose to Kaori’s.

“If you knew about it, why not fix it? I think you are fawning over Kaori’s kindness. Kaori is not just trying to bother you.”

Kouki admonishes Hajime. In Kouki’s eyes, Hajime is not taking Kaori’s kindness with any sincerity. It’s not like he wanted to be babied! Rather please just leave me alone! I wanted to argue with him, but there would be more trouble if I did. There was no use in arguing with Kouki because he always felt he was right.

Even if they asked him to “fix” his hobbies, his hobbies was at the center of his life. Because, his father was a game creator and his mother was a shoujo mangaka, in the future he wanted to get a partime job at his father’s company or mother’s workplace.

He was already practicing his skills, and all his hobbies were perfect for his plans. Hajime did not feel like changing his life style because he had given serious thoughts about it already. If Kaori had not taken an interest in Hajime, he would have lived a quiet student life.

“Iya~Ahaha…”

Therefore, laughingly, Hajime let it go. However, the goddess of

unawareness dropped a bomb again like always.

“Kouki-kun, What are you saying? I’m just talking to Nagumo-kun because I want to.”

Zawatto*, the classroom became noisy. The male students glared and clenched their teeth with Saki at that. Hiyama’s group started to consider where they could take Hajime during the lunch break.

“Oh?…Aa, Really, Kaori is so nice.”

Kouki seems to take Kaori’s response about Hajime at face value. Kouki’s was a good person, but he lacked the perception to really understand the meaning of what is being said. Hajime took this time to look up at the sky to escape the awkward situation.

“…Gomenasaine? I don’t want to rude to you two but…”

At that place the person with the best understanding of people, Shizuku, secretly apologized to Hajime. Hajime replied with a “No choice” with a grin and a shrug.

At that time the bell chimed to signal the start of class, as their teacher entered the classroom. The teacher conveyed the usually information. And, Hajime started his daydream, while the class started.

Looking at that Hajime, Kaori smiled, Shizuku just grinned, males were clicking their tongues, girls were directing a gaze of scorn.

* * *

I returned to consciousness at the feeling of the class's bustle. Since it was a habitual sleep, he had a timing of when to wake up. The kind of feeling he got, signify that it was lunch break.

Hajime raises his face from the desk and takes out his basic lunch with a rustling sound. Looking around the people who were buying food were already out the class, so the number of people in class were decreasing. Still, there were still about 2/3 of the class with their bento left, while their 4th period social studies teacher Hatakeyama Aiko (25 years old) was chatting with several students near the podium.

Ji~yururu, ki~yupon!

Immediately, Hajime tried to take a nap after eating his lunch. However, a certain goddess would not all it, for Hajime she was the devil, smiled as she approached his desk.

Hajime inwardly moaned "Damn!" He seemed to be especially sleepy on Mondays. Usually before Kaori's and the other interacted with him, he would have been gone to find a place to sleep, but those two days of all nighters had taken a toll on him.

“Nagumo-kun, how rare it is to find you in class at lunch. Obento? If you want let’s eat together.”

Once again, a disturbing atmosphere filled the classroom, Hajime scream in his heart. No, who do you pay attention to me now? Without meaning to, an unknown dialect almost escaped from his mouth. Hajime tried to refuse.

“Ah, thanks for the offer, Shirasaki-san. However, I have already finished eating so why not join the others?”

As I said that, I showed her my empty lunch pack that was completely gone. To refuse such an offer people would think “Who is this guy?”, but it’s better than the constant nagging he would get.

However, such a low level refusal was not enough to stop the Goddess from trying.

“Eh! You only ate that much? That’s not good, you should eat properly. I’ll give you some of mine!”

(Give me a break! Notice it! Notice the atmosphere!)

Suddenly my saviors appeared, when I started to produce a cold sweat from the increasing pressure. It was Kouki’s group.

“Kaori. Let’s eat together. It seems like Nagumo hasn’t slept enough yet. I won’t allow such a sleepyhead to enjoy Kaori’s delicious meal.”

Kaori just laughs refreshingly at Kouki’s smug response. For someone as insensitive as Kaori, an Ikemen’s smile and words had no effect on her.

“Eh? What are you unable to allow?”

Shizuku unwittingly blew out a laugh at Kaori’s response. Kouki just laughs at that and starts to just chat it up. Still 4 of the most famous students were gathered around Hajime’s desk and that did not allow the glares to weaken.

Hajime complained to himself and let out a sigh.

(Already, these guys are in their own worlds. No matter how you look at these 4, they are caught up in their own atmosphere. Please someone from another world summon him.)

Hajime tries to escape reality. When he was about to moving away he was frozen.

In front of his eyes, a complex array of snow white circles appeared before him. The students also noticed this weird phenomenon. He watched as the patterns shined and the force that held him started to hold the other students, he thought it was a magic formation.

The magic formation got gradually brighter and soon expanded to the size of the whole classroom. When the students finally processed the situation they tried to move and scream. When the formation started to shine, Aiko-sensei shouted “Everybody get out”, but at this instance the formation exploded.

The light covered the classroom for a few seconds, then a few minutes. When it cleared no one was left in the classroom. The classroom was devoid of human life but all their belongings, that were not on them, were left behind.

The world would later call this a Spirited Away incident, but that is for another time.

Arifureta: Volume 1 Chapter 1

Summoned to a Different World

Hajime stood there with his hands protecting his face and his eyes closed, but when he heard the rustling noise he slowly opened his eyes.

Hajime looked around in utter amazement. The first thing to catch his eyes was a huge mural. The mural was about 10 meters in height, there was a person with androgynous features that had an aureole in the back and long flowing blonde hair with a slight smile on the mural. A grassy plain, a lake, and mountains are drawn in the background and the person had both of their hands extended out. It is a beautiful mural. It is a great mural. However, Hajime felt that the eyes were somewhat cold.

When he looked around, he noticed that they were in a huge hall. He wondered if the whole hall was made of marble. The whole building was done with a smooth white luster, it had huge pillars that was carved beautifully holding it up, and the ceiling was done in a dome shape. The whole place looked like a cathedral and the hall had a very solemn atmosphere.

It seemed that Hajime and the rest were at the top of a pedestal that was located in the deepest part of the building. They were in a position higher than the surrounding area. His classmates also looked around stunned at what they were seeing. Apparently, all that students that were present in the classroom at that time, was caught up in the situation.

Hajime glanced behind. There was Kaori also looking around stunned at was before them. She did not seem to be injured, so Hajime felt relief.

Perhaps, the people that were surrounding the pedestal would be able to explain the situation. Yeah, Hajime and his classmates were not the only ones here. There were at least 30 people on their knees giving prayer with both their hands in front of their chest. All of them wore a white robe that was embroidered with gold, and they had a staff right next to them. At the tip of the staves it spread out like a fan, and several pieces of disks hung around it in a circle.

One particular priest looked to be about 70 years old, what made him stand out was his very formal headwear that was close to 30 cm in height, stepped forward towards them. Though with his old age, he was wearing too flashy of a robe. He might have passed for someone in his 50s if not for the wrinkles that engraved his face.

The old priest spoke to them with a clear and calming voice that fit his appearance, with the staff in his hand.

“Welcome to Tortus, our Hero and his fellow countrymen. We welcome you all. I am called Ishtar Lombard and I am the Pope of the Church of Saints. Please let’s get along.”

After he introduced himself, he presented a smile that was often associated with nice elderly people.

* * *

Currently, Hajime and the rest moved locations, they had passed through the great hall and saw some tables lined up 10 meters in front of them. Without exception this room was made with gorgeous details. From a layman's perspective, it seemed like all the works that decorated the room was made with masterful technique. Probably this was where they were going to eat. Kouki's group of 4 and Aiko-sensei sat at the head of the table. Hajime sat at the last spot.

Nobody made any noise as they were guided to this area and seated, their minds were still trying to work out what happened to them. It was up to Ishtar to explain the situation, even Kouki with his EX Charisma was silently wondering. Aiko-sensei gathered the students like a teacher should, with teary eyes.

When everyone was seated, with amazing timing, the maids entered pushing carts. Yeah, real maids! Not like those fat Obaa-sans maids that plagued the earth. These were real and true beautiful woman, beautiful women maids that embodied the dreams of a man.

The majority of the class boys stared at the maids because of their adolescent minds. Though the girls were sending cold glares at them.

Hajime instinctively stares at the maid that comes by his side to serve the drinks…but for some reason he felt a chill down his spine and he fixed his staring. When he faced the direction of the chill, Hajime saw Kaori smiling at him. Hajime decided to stop looking.

Ishtar started his explanation after he confirmed that everyone had gotten a drink.

“I’m sure you are all confused. I will explain first, so please listen till the end before asking any questions.”

After that, Ishtar arbitrarily explained the situation and it seemed like a fantasy.

In summary.

First, the world was called Tortus. In this world, there were three major races. Humans, Devils, and demi-humans. The Humans ruled over the north area. The Devils ruled over the south area. The demi-humans lived quietly in the wilderness to the east.

Of these, the Humans and Devils have been in a war for several hundred years. When compared a Devil was much stronger than a Human but Humans had the number advantage. Both sides have not been in a large-scale war in a few decades, but they are preparing themselves. Recently there has been abnormal happenings occurring. The deployment of monsters by the Devils.

Monsters are said to be a variant of wild animals that took in magic and changed. They were not considered real living organisms. They had the power to mimic peculiar magic that other races used, and this made them powerful and dangerous animals.

Until now there were very few people that could tame them. Even if they could be tamed, the tamer could only control 1 or 2 monsters at most. This common thought was completely reversed by the Devils. This meant that the Humans no longer had their number advantage. Now the Human race was facing a crisis.

“The one to have summoned you here is Eht-sama. He is the god that protect us and the one we worship in the Church of Saints. He is the one that created this world. Most likely Eht-sama realized that if things remained this way the Humans would face destruction. For this reason you were summoned to avoid this future. The world you come from is higher ranked than ours, the people from your world would have exceptional power here. Before the summon, we prayed to Eht-sama. You were the “salvation” that he sent.

With your powers, we will overthrow the Devils and save the Humans by the will of Eht-sama.”

Ishtar said this with a very rapt expression. He was most likely recalling what the oracle had told him. More than 90% of Humans followed the teachings of the Church, those who have heard the oracle is often assigned to a position of power.

Hajime suspected this so called “Will of God”. He felt that Ishtar was distorting what the world really was and what it faced. People that wanted to protest suddenly appeared. It was Aiko-sensei.

“Please don’t joke around! In the end, these children will be fighting in a war! I won’t allow such a thing! I will absolutely not

allow such a thing! Please let us return! Surely, their families will be worried about them! What you have done is merely kidnapping!”

Aiko-sensei was angry. She was a very popular social studies teacher that was 25 years old. She had a baby like face with her 150 cm height. Her hair was done in a bob cut. For her student’s sake she tried her best and it was very heartwarming. There was often times when the students were protected by her even though her physique was not that adult like.

The students often called her Ai-chan, even if she got angry when they referred to her as such. She was aiming to be a dignified teacher.

She was angered at the unreasonable summoning and stood up against it. Ah, Ai-chan is trying her best again. There were students who were looking at Aiko-sensei’s admonishment of Ishtar with a fuzzy feeling. The following words from Ishtar froze them.

“I sympathize with your feelings. Unfortunately we have no way to return you.”

Silence filled the halls. There was a cold air that appeared throughout the whole area. Everyone gaze at Ishtar, not knowing what to say to that.

“That’s impossible, what do you mean not possible? If you can summon us, you can send us back!”

Aiko-sensei shouted out.

“As I said earlier, it was Eht-sama that summoned you. The magic that interferes with other worlds is a magic we humans cannot use. Whether or not you can return it is left up to Eht-sama to decide.”

“Such a thing…”

Aiko-sensei lost her strength at that point and dropped into her chair like a stone. The students started to rustle at that.

“Lies! Why can’t we return?”

“Iyaa. I just want to return!”

“Don’t even joke about war! Don’t mess with me!”

“Why, Why, Why…”

The students started to panic at the situation. Even Hajime was not okay with this. However, being an Otaku he had read many situations like this before. Therefore, he expected these patterns. Since it was not the worst pattern, he was a lot calmer than the other students. Incidentally one of the worst pattern was being summoned to be a slave.

While everyone was taken off guard, Ishtar was just calming watching the students' reactions and choose to let it flow naturally. However, Hajime could see that behind that calm expression there was contempt for them. The priest was probably thinking that they should be honored to be picked by Eht-sama.

Still, the panic did not settle down. Kouki at this moment stood up and slam the table with a bang. This sound surprised the students and got their attention. When he confirmed that he had everyone's attention, Kouki began to talk.

"Everyone, there is no reason to make so much noise in front of Ishtar-san. He had nothing to do with it. …Me, I'm going to fight. The humans of this world are facing a crisis, that is a fact. Knowing that, I cannot ignore their pleas for help. If I was summoned to save humans, we may be able to return after we have saved them. Ishtar-san, how about it?"

"Right, Eht-sama will answer the wishes of the Saviors."

"We all have special powers right? Since I came here I've been feeling this sense of power."

"Yes, that's right. Roughly, each of you have power that is several times higher than the people from this world."

"Then it's okay. I'll fight. I'll save the people, and then we can all go home. I'll save the world and everyone, you'll see!"

Kouki gripped his fist tightly as he declared this. Vainly, Kouki showed his bright smile that sparkled. At this moment, there was no doubt that his EX charisma was very effective. The students that earlier had an expression of despair began to regain calmness and vigor. Kouki's eyes that shined so brightly, seemed to have found hope in this situation. Half of the school girls sent admiring glances at him.

"I thought you would say something like that. If you were to do it alone, I would worry about you. I'll also fight."

"Ryutaro"

"At this moment that is all we can do. It's not like I hate it, I'll fight too."

"Shizuku"

"Eh, If Shizuku-chan is going, I'll try my best."

"Kaori."

The usual group of 4 agree with Kaori. The rest of the classmates seem to approve and went with the flow. Aiko-sensei tried to argue against it with watery eyes, but against Kouki's display it was useless.

After all, it seemed that everyone was going to participate in the war. Most likely the classmates did not truly understand what it was meant to go to war, they were just fantasizing it. Most likely they agreed as a mechanism to escape the grim reality they were in, or else their spirits might have caved at the surreal situation. Hajime just observed Ishtar while thinking these things. The priest had a very satisfied expression on his face.

Hajime noticed it though. While Ishtar was giving the explanation, he observed Kouki, he confirmed what reaction they would have to the story. With Kouki's strong sense of justice, it was easy to see his reaction to the tragedy that would befall humans. After he just told them about the ruthlessness of the Devils, Ishtar specifically emphasized the cruelty. Ishtar probably had good insight. He was wondering who had the most influence in the group.

It was probably natural for someone in the world's largest religion, but what a tricky person. Hajime added Ishtar as someone to be careful of in his head.

* * *

The one waiting for them after the summon was not a priestess or princess, but a really old guy!

Arifureta: Volume 1 Chapter 2

Status Plate

It’s explanation time.

Since they all agreed to participate in the war, the students would have to learn how to fight. Even if they had a lot of extra power and potential, they were all just regular Japanese high school students that were used to peace. Suddenly fighting monsters and devils would not go well.

However, the church and parties involved had already predicted this circumstance, Ishtar said, this church is located on “God’s Mountain” and at the foot is the “Hairihi Kingdom” have arrange for this. The kingdom had a very close relationship with the Church, the god that they worshipped, was the God of Creation Eht and this country was founded by the family of Charm Byrne. The relationship was strong because the church supported this country.

The students went out the front gate of the church. They were going to descend the mountain and visit the Hairihi Kingdom. The church was located at the summit of “God’s Mountain”. When the majestic church gates opened, there was a sea of clouds there to greet them. Even if it was very high, they did not feel the effects of the high altitude. Maybe it was because the magic made it a more comfortable living environment. They were fascinated with the grand scene of the blue sky, the sparkling sun, and the sea of clouds.

Ishtar urged them to proceed, while boasting about something. Eventually a circular white pedestal surround by fences came into their view. The beautiful corridor was made of the same material as seen in the cathedral they approached the pedestal and rode on it.

On the pedestal, there were huge magic formations carved into it. Because there was a sea of clouds on the other side of the fence, the students gathered in the center restlessly.

Ishtar started to chant.

“The road that leads, opens for the faithful, “Tendou”.”

As soon as he said that, the magic formation started to shine. The pedestal started to move smoothly like it was on a ropeway, it moved diagonally towards the ground. Apparently, the “chant” empowered the magic formation engraved into the pedestal. The pedestal was most likely a ropeway. For the students, seeing magic the first time made them excited. When the pedestal broke into the clouds, it caused an uproar.

Eventually, it passed through the clouds and the ground could be seen. They could see a big town underneath. A huge castle was built into the mountain and the castle town spread from the castle. This was the Hairihi Kingdom. The pedestal lead them to the roof of a very expensive tower that was connected to the royal palace.

Hajime cynically laughed at the production value at display. To descend from the heavens through the sea of clouds, they were

being presented as the Chosen of God. They just didn't present the students in a good light, but also the members of the church.

Hajime remembered the pre-war Japan days. At that time religion and politics were closely tied together. There was a likelihood that it would lead to trouble later on. However, this world may be even more strained. After all, this world had the power to touch other worlds, all the while following the "Will of God".

The possibility of them returning, all relied on saving the world on the feelings of their god. While looking over the Capital city and its view becoming clearer, Hajime suppressed the uneasiness he felt in his heart. Anyway, he was going to do what he can.

* * *

When they arrived at the Royal Palace, they were ushered into the throne room straight away. They walked through the corridors and could not help but notice the beauty of the decorations. Along the way, they saw someone dressed up like a knight. they also passed by some maids, everyone was fully uniformed. They looked at the students with awe. The students seemed to be popular or known already.

Hajime seemed uncomfortable so he stuck around at the end of the group. They arrived in front of a set of huge double doors that was designed beautifully, two Soldiers stood at attention on both sides of the door when Ishtar and the party came. Without waiting for a reply, they opened the door.

Ishtar just leisurely entered like it was the natural thing to do. Students filed in feeling a little uneasy, with the exception of Kouki.

At that point I entered the doorway too. There was a red carpet that led from the entrance all the way to a luxurious throne. On the throne sat a middle aged man that conveyed ambition and dignity. They all stood before the throne and waited. There was a woman next to the throne, that seemed to be the queen. Next to her was a 10 year old boy with blonde hair and blue eyes. A 15-16 year old Bishoujo was next to him, and there was a small 7-8 year old girl that accompanied her. There were people that looked like civil officers on the right side of the carpet, on the left were what looked like to be military officers.

Arriving in front of the throne, Hajime's group stopped, while Ishtar proceeded next to the King. The King lightly kissed the Pope's hand as a sign of respect. Apparently, the Pope was the top dog here. This just confirmed Hajime's theory that the country was run by "God", he sighed inwardly at that.

From there, they introduced themselves. The King's name was Erihido S. B. Hairihi. Luruaria the Queen, Randell the prince, 1st princess Liliana, and 2nd princess Maribelle. After, the prime minister, Knight commander, and other high status people introduced themselves. It seemed that Kaori's charm was universal because the young prince was gazing admiringly at her.

A banquet was held after and they were able to enjoy this world's cuisine. The appearance of this kingdom was very similar to olden Europeans of Earth. The drink they served was pink in color but glistened like a rainbow, it was very delicious.

The prince seemed to take a liking to Kaori because he was often talking to Kaori, and this got a lot of the class boys fretting. Hajime did not expect much chance for the prince because he was just 10 years old.

In the royal palace, they were introduced to the instructors that would train them. They also would provided shelter, food, and clothing for all of them. The instructors were handpicked from the Knights, Imperial Court Mages, and much more. This would allow them to develop friendships for the forthcoming war.

After they were finished with the dinner, each person was lead to their own room. Hajime was not the only one to be amazed by the bed that had a canopy over it. Hajime was uncomfortable in such a luxurious room. Still the room allowed for all the strain and stress they got today to melt away. He laid on the bed and he slowly drifted off to sleep.

* * *

Training and lectures began the very next day.

First, each of the students were introduced to a silver plate (12cm x 7 cm). The students looked at the plates curiously. Knight Commander Meld Loggins started to explain.

He thought it was good to have a constant attendance for training, he did not seem to be able to leave it to the students to clear up

their mess. Besides Meld, there was the Deputy Leader, who just laughed and said it was going to be alright. Well the Deputy leader may be alright.

“Yoshi, did everyone get one? These plates are called Status Plates. Literally, these plates will show your stats and status. The plate also serves as an identification card. As long as you have this, you cannot get lost, so don’t lose it.”

Meld had a very carefree way of speaking. He had an open-hearted character, since they were going to be comrades was he going to speak formally to them. He advised that they talk to each other in a normal manner. They asked them to feel at ease. The students did not feel comfortable addressing their elders in such a nonchalant way.

“There are magic cravings on the plate. I will make a small wound with a needle on your finger, just drip a drop of your blood onto that magic formation. Then the owner of that plate will be registered. If you say “Status Open”, the plate will display you your stats. Ah, have you never heard of such a thing? I didn’t know that. This is a kind of artifact from ancient times. ”

“Artifact?”

Kouki asked the question because he was not familiar with the word.

“The artifact is a powerful tool that cannot be reproduced with modern means. It is said that they were created when God and his

family still roamed this land. The status plate is one of the artifacts he left behind that cannot be reproduced. It is usually would be called a national treasure rather than an artifact, but it is distributed in the generally public. Because it was a very convenient ID card. ”

I see, so the student’s poked their fingers for their blood and smeared their blood onto the plates to activate the innate magic. The magic formation shined red for an instant. Hajime did the same with his blood and plate.

Name	Hajime Nagumo		
Age	16 Years Old		
Level	1		
Class	Transmutation Artist (Synergist)		
Strength	10		
Vitality	10		
Dexterity	10		
Agility	10		
Intelligence	10		
Resistance	10		
Magic	10		
Magic Resistance	10		
Skills	• Transmutation • Language Comprehension		

To see the stats displayed, he couldn’t help but feel like he was a character in a game. The other students were looking over their status seriously. The stats were than explained to them by Meld.

“Did everyone see? Let me explain. First, let go over “level”. The level will increase if you get an increase in stats. The max level for a human was 100. In other words, the level shows the base and potential that a human can reach. When you reach level 100, then you have achieved the potential of humans. It is very rare for someone to reach that though.”

Unlike games, leveling up does not mean getting extra stats in our case.

“Your stats can be raised by training, magic, or magical tools. Also, someone with a high magic stat allows other stats to increase faster. Although we don’t know the whole detail, it is believe that magical power somehow assists the physical body to improve.

Afterwards, look forward to the gear we selected for you. After all, you are the heroes. The national treasury is being used to supply you!”

From what Meld said, just because you kill a demon or monster does not guarantee your stats will go up. The stats will improve steadily with practice and experience.

“Next we are going to cover “Class”. Simply this is the talent you have. The skills you have at the end of your status is directly linked to the class you have. People who have a class are rare. The classes can be divided into two category: combat classes and non-combat classes. A combat class only shows up in 1 out of 1000 people with classes. Non-combat class only shows up in 1 out of 100 people. Out of those non-combat jobs there are about 1 out of 10 that have an extraordinary class. Most of the people in non-combat classes have manufacturing classes.”

Hajime took a look at his stats. Surely his class was “Synergist”. He was gifted the ability to “synergize”. Well, they were from a stronger world, so naturally he should have higher specs than a normal person from Tortus. Hajime just slightly smirked at that thought. After all he was glad to have talent. However his joy was short lived because Meld started to explain more about the stats.

“So…let’s see everyone’s stats. For example, the average person has stats of around 10 at level 1. Well you guys should have several times higher than that. So enviable! Please give reports on what your status plate says. This is so we can develop a training regimen that fits each of you.”

The average person at level 1 has stats around 10. Hajime’s stats lined up perfectly to display 10s on all of them. Hajime tilt his head and scratched at it as he broke out in an unpleasant sweat.

(Are? No matter how you look at it, I’m so average…so absolutely average. Not a cheat. I’m not “TUEEEE”(?) What about everyone else? Maybe it was like this in the beginning.)

Hajime clings to that hope as he looks around at the others. Everyone else had a bright face, nothing like how Hajime’s face was like.

Immediately responding to Meld’s request, Kouki steps forward to report his status.

Name	Nagumo Kouki		
Age	17 Years Old		
Gender	Male		
Class	Hero		
Level	1		
Strength	100	100	
Vitality	100	100	
Agility	100	100	
Magic	100	100	
Resistance	100	100	
Magic Resistance	100	100	
Skills	• Aptitude All Attribute		

- Resist All Elements
- Resist Physical
- Complex Magic
- Swordplay
- Herculean Strength
- Quick Movement
- Foresight
- High-speed Magic Recovery
- Sign Perception
- Magic Perception
- Limit Break
- Language Comprehension

The definition of a Cheat.

“Ho, truly a hero. To be at the same stats as me at level 1…I’m a little depressed. Usually a person only has 2 to 3 skills…unbelievable. Very reliable.”

“Iya~, Ahaha…”

Kouki scratches his head in embarrassment at Meld’s praise. By the way, Meld is level 62. His stats average at around 200, and this is considered top-level in the world for a human. However, Kouki is already at half his stats at only level 1. At this growth rate, he will overpass him quickly.

By the way, Skill can equate to talent and that is something that cannot be changed. The only exception is “Derivation Skill.” This derives from polishing ones skill for many years, this skill is acquired when the person can “break through the wall” to acquire it. It sounds easy, but it has not been done before, it would mean to get a boost in skill level in just one

day.

It was thought that only Kouki was special, but the others had superior stats, although not as good as Kouki, they can still be considered cheats. A lot of the classmates had combat classes too. Hajime just looked at his class name. When trying to imagine his class, it was not possible to see this class in battle. Also, he only had two skills. One of them was the default language comprehension too. Truthfully, he only had one real skill then. Hajime just gave a dry smile at that. Because he had to report to him, Hajime handed his plate to Meld.

Until now, Meld had a great expression from seeing all those special status plates. To be able to have so many strong comrades was a joy. Meld's expression retained its smile as he stated "Huh?" He beat the plate Hajime handed to him to see if it was malfunctioning, and held it up to the light. After staring at it, he returned the plate to Hajime with an unremarkable expression.

"Ah, this is. If you think about Synergists, it was a crafting class. It's useful if you want to be a blacksmith…"

Meld described the class to Hajime with as much articulation as he could. The boys who did not like Hajime, would jump at opportunity to make fun of Hajime. The class was clearly a non-combat class. All his classmates had combat classes, Hajime would not be helpful in the future battles because of this.

While grinning, Hiyama Daisuke screamed out.

"Oi Oi, Nagumo. It can't possibly be, but did you get a non-combat class?

How can a crafting class fight? Meld-san, is this class rare?”

“…Iya, 1 out of every 10 crafting class is one. All the countries employ a lot of them.”

“Oi oi, Nagumo~, are you going to fight like that?”

Hiyama throws an arm around Hajime’s shoulder, this just annoys Hajime. If you look around at the students, the boys in particular were grinning at his misfortune.

“Sa~, I won’t know if I don’t try it out.”

“Jyaa, let us see your stats. The class isn’t that great, but you do have great stats, right?”

He could already guess the stats from the expression Meld had earlier, he just wanted to bully Hajime even more. He really is a bastard. His three lackeys also joined in on the fun. It was the typical behavior, the lackeys joined in with their leader while he picked on someone. The fact was though, Kaori and Shizuku had very unpleasant expression at the bullying.

If Daisuke liked Kaori, how was he not able to read her disdain for this kind of treatment? Hajime just handed the plate like it was nothing.

When he looked at Hajime’s plate, Hiyama laughed at it. He passed the plate to the others and his followers also joined in on the laughter.

“Fu~Hahahaha, what is this? All of it is so average.”

“Kya~hahah, all of it is 10. He is probably weaker than the kids around the block.

“Hi~hahahah, I can’t take it! He is going to die! He can’t even be a meat shield!”

Kaori started to approach the students that were laughing with an angry expression. However, before she got there, someone let out a voice filled with anger. It was Aiko-sensei.

“Kora-! What are you guys laughing at? Laughing at your fellow classmate is something I will not allow! I will absolutely not allow it! Return Nagumo-kun’s plate!”

Aiko-sensei tried to express her anger as well as she could have with her tiny body. The plate was reluctantly returned to Hajime after that.

Aiko-sensei tried to cheer Hajime up by tapping his shoulders.

“Nagumo-kun, don’t mind it at all. I’m also a non-combat class. Just like my class, my stats are average. You’re not alone, Nagumo-kun.”

At that, Hajime was handed Aiko-sensei’s plate.

Name	Aiko		
Age	45 Years Old		
Gender	Female		
Class	Farmer		
Strength	30		
Vitality	30		
Resistance	30		
Magic	100		
Magic Resistance	30		
Skills			

- Soil Management,
- Soil Restoration,
- Range Cultivation,
- Growth Stimulation,
- Selective Breeding,
- Plant Appraisal,
- Fertilizer Production,
- Mixture Development,
- Auto Harvest,
- Fermentation Operation,
- Range Temperature Adjustment,
- Farm Barrier,
- Abundant Rain,
- Language Comprehension

Hajime look at the plate with dead-fish eyes.

“Are, what’s the matter? Nagumo-kun!” Aiko-sensei started to shake Hajime. Yeah, her stats overall was average, her class was also non-combat, but if only comparing magic it was hero level. She also had quite a number of skills. Resources were a big problem in wars. Unlike Hajime’s class, this was a very good alternative. Aiko-sensei was good enough to be considered a cheat.

This damaged him even more because he thought he was not alone.

“Ara Ara, Ai-chan stop sparkling…”

“Na-Nagumo-kun! Are you okay?”

Hajime was no longer responding, Shizuku just smiled wryly at it. Kaori runs up anxiously. Aiko just tilts her head in confusion. As usual, Aiko-sensei was somewhat of an airhead.

Although it did stop the bullying Hajime was going through, but it seemed that the future was going to be hard for Hajime.

* * *

Setting is haphazard.

Possibility of modification is high.

Arifureta: Volume 1 Chapter 3

Bullying the Weakest

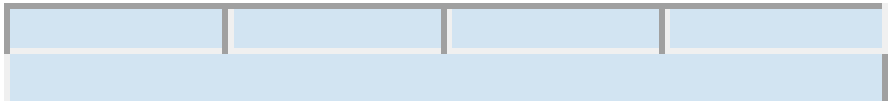
Two weeks has passed since Hajime's condition was known to everyone.

Currently, Hajime was using his break from training to check out the Royal Library. There was a huge book that was titled "An Illustrated Guide to The Monsters of the North Continent" that Hajime read a lot of. Why read such a book? Because even after training for 2 weeks, his talentless showed even more. Since he was not strong, he decided to study to gain knowledge and wisdom to use.

Hajime looked through the book for quite a while, but eventually sighed and threw it back onto the desk. When the book made a loud noise, the librarian glared at Hajime.

After flinching at the glare, Hajime apologized for the noise. "Hey! There won't be a next time," after he received the stare they let it go. "What are you doing!?" he said to himself, acting like his own Tsukkomi, he sighed at that revelation.

Hajime slowly took out his Status Plate and rested it on his palm.



Name	Ayumu Hadame		
Age	17 Years Old		
Level	1		
Class	Transmutation Artist (Synergist)		
Vitality	12		
Strength	12		
Resistance	12		
Agility	12		
Magic	12		
Magic Resistance	12		
Skills			
• Transmutation • Language Comprehension			

This was the result of 2 weeks of hard training. What a big increase! I shouldn't try to be my own secret Tsukkomi. By the way, Kouki's…

Name	Kouki Amemura		
Age	17 Years Old		
Level	1		
Class	Hero		
Vitality	300		
Strength	300		
Resistance	300		
Agility	300		
Magic	300		
Magic Resistance	300		
Skills			
• Aptitude All Attribute • Resist All Elements • Resist Physical • Complex Magic • Swordplay • Herculean Strength • Quick Movement • Foresight • High-speed Magic Recovery • Sign Perception • Magic Perception • Limit Break • Language Comprehension			

His growth rate was 5 times that of Hajime's.

Just as a bonus, Hajime found out that he had no magical aptitude. What happens if you have no magical aptitude? Let's explains the concept of magic in this world.

The magic in Tortus is process where magic from within the body is utilized with an aria and magic formation. The magic will then proceed through the magical formula in the magic formation to achieve the results. There is no way to directly manipulate magic in its base form, so you must correctly set up the magic formation you want to use.

Also the amount of magic used is directly related to how long the incantation lasts. The amount of formulas and formations in the magic formation also dictates its complexity and scale of effect. all of this is necessary to perform stronger spells. Even to just cast a simple "Fireball", that is present in classic RPGs, it takes a 20 cm diameter magical formation to cast it. The basic concepts are: attribute, power, range, scope, and mana usage all of this is required. There can be other things added to the formula like inductivity and sustain duration to create stronger magic.

However, there are exceptions to these concepts. These are "aptitudes". With this, some parts of the formula can be omitted. For example, if you have an aptitude with Fire, you can skip writing the attribute section of the magic formula. This omission is done because the person can imagine it. Instead of writing it out, the person can imagine the fire when chanting the spell.

Because most human beings have some kind of aptitude, the 20 cm diameter magic formation is about average. In Hajime cases, because he

has no aptitude, he has to add a lot of to his formula to get the same affect. He has to add concepts like: speed, trajectory, ballistic-diffusion rate, and much more. For his case, it would take a 2 m magic circle to perform that "fireball" spell. This was totally useless in combat.

For magic, there is two ways to engrave the magic formula, into special metals or minerals that allow for reuse or disposable special paper. The former way is more expensive and more powerful than the disposable version. Since the non-paper version are bulky, you can't carry around much of them. Both of the variations have their own advantages and disadvantages. The staff that Ishtar has is the permanent type.

Because of how magic worked, it was not practical in close combat, it would be impossible if the person did not have an aptitude. For a manufacturing class, "Synergist" was stuck with useless skills that just process or changed the forms of minerals. There was no artifact that helped with the synergy, just gloves that had the synergy magical formula drawn on it. Well, he can make pitfall and protrusions. Hajime had been able to do it on the ground and gradually he could up the scale. Well, it was useless in combat.

All his classmates labeled him useless after they saw his stats and his progress after 2 weeks. Reluctantly, he started to accumulate knowledge. He did not see a bright future ahead for him, this caused him to sigh increasingly each day.

Hajime considered, while looking at the blue sky from the library window, whether he should take a trip. It was at the very end. Hajime had begun to be lost in wondering where he wanted to go, while he was learning things that he tried so hard to learn these past 2 weeks.

(After all, he wanted to check out the demi-human country. He can't really

say he went to another world if he did not experience a kemomimi. However, they were in the “Sea of Trees”. Besides the slaves, it was rare to see them outside of the forest.)

To Hajime’s knowledge, the Demi-humans were a race that was discriminated. They lived in the Hartzena Forest that spread north and south on the east side of the continent. They are discriminated against because they do not have any magical power at all.

In ancient times, this world was created by ancient magic that was performed by their god Eht. The magic used in this age is a degrade version of those ancient magic. Therefore, it is believed that magic is a gift from God. Well, that is what the Church of Saints taught everyone.

So, for a race to not have any magical power, it is perceived by humans that they were scorned by God.

Then, how did monster come into being? The monster’s are not to be gifted by God, but rather they were just a natural disaster that occurred. They were only vermin. Hajime was disgusted inwardly by the interpretation people had on them.

The Devils worshipped a different God than the ones that the Church worshipped. This was similar to how the Demi-humans thought too. Devil’s all had a very high aptitude for magic. They were able to perform stronger magic with shorter incantations and smaller magic formations than humans.

Humans thought the Devils were their enemies because they worshipped a different God, and discriminate against the unloved Demi-humans. This

was what the Church taught. The Devil's felt the same. The Demi-humans, just wanted to live in peace. All the races were very exclusive.

(If going to the "Sea of Trees" is impossible, maybe I should head for the west sea. If I remember correctly, there is a maritime town called Erisen. If I can't see a Kemomimi, than I want to see a Mermaid. It's a man's romance. He wanted to try the seafood here too.)

The town is said to be off the coast of the western sea and a group of demi-human fishermen are there. This is the only demi-human group that is protected by the Empire. This is because 80% of the seafood the northern continent consumes is provided by them. It's pretty much a straight reason. I wonder where the religious reason to discriminate them had gone? When he heard the story, Hajime felt like he was a Tsukkomi at that.

Past the western sea is the large Guryuen Desert. In this desert is the great transist oasis the Dukedom of Ancarge and the Mountain of Great Flames. This Mountain of Great Flames is one of the 8 Great Dungeons.

The 8 Great Dungeons, are one of the most dangerous areas in the world. The previously mentioned Hartzena Forest is also one, and another is the Orcus Dungeon which is located southwest of the Hairihi Kingdom. The reason they were considered 3 of the 8 Great Dungeons is because it was recorded in history. The other 5 Great Dungeons have yet to be located.

One of the proposed Great Dungeon is the Raisen Great Canyon, which expands from the north to south of the continent. At the southern hinterlands, where snow and ice are prominent is another rumored Great Dungeon called the Schnee Snowfield.

(After all, the desert is impossible…no other choice but to look for slaves in the Empire. As expected though I have no confidence in treating someone as a slave.)

When mentioning Empire, it refers to the Hersha Empire. This country is a rising country that was formed by mercenaries that fought a large-scale war against the Devils 300 years ago. The Empire is known for employing mercenaries and is regard as a military centered nation, often adventurers congregated there. Advocates the supremacy of force and is quite the black country.

This Empire thought about the uses for Demi-humans, they concluded that the Demi-humans could be slaves.

The Hersha Empire existed to the east of the Hairihi Kingdom, and between these two countries is the neutral Fyulen Commercial City. The neutral city is an independent entity that does not rely on any country. Using its neutrality, the city was able to exert all of its management into economic expansion. If there is anything you want, the Commercial City is believed to have it.

(But, if I want to return I can't just run away. Crap, it's almost time for training!)

After all, it was just escapism of his current situation. Since it was almost time for training, Hajime left the library in a hurry. From the library, it was a short distance to the Royal Palace, on the way you can hear and see the bustle in the Royal Capital. There was the voices of children playing and shopkeepers advertising their wares. A distance away you can hear someone scolding a child, this was the picture of a daily peaceful day.

(Since there does not seem to be a war, can't they just return us.)

Hajime just dreamed of that impossibility. It was just escapism to the depressing times that were ahead.

* * *

When Hajime arrived at the training facility, there were already many students there. Some of them were chatting while others were doing some free practice. It seems like he arrived earlier than he thought. Hajime went to get a western-style sword, that was provided for at the side, and did some free practice while he waited.

Suddenly from behind, something surprised Hajime to cause him to move. By rotating he was able to avoid it but he broke out into a cold sweat at the drawn sword. Hajime looked back while he was frowning, he had a tired expression at this.

There they were, led by Hiyama Daisuke, was the Bastards Four (Hajime made it up). Since their training had started, they have been messing with Hajime whenever possible. They were half the reason why he felt depressed when training. (The other half was his incompetence).

"Yo, Nagumo. What are you doing? Even though you are useless with a sword. Seriously useless."

"Hey, that's so mean, Hiyama. Even if it's the truth~ Gya ha ha ha."

“Why do you even come to train every day? If I was you, I would be too ashamed to come. Hi hi hi!”

“Hey, Daisuke. Since this guy is so pathetic, why don’t we help him practice?”

They laughed and grinned at that like it was the funniest thing in the world.

“Hey, you are so nice, Shinji. Well, since I’m so nice too, I’ll help out~”

“Good idea. Since I’m super nice, I’ll use my precious time to help. You should be thankful, Nagumo~”

Hiyama would take them to an area where other people would not see, while he acted friendly with Hajime and spoke. The classmates that noticed this would just turn a blind eye to it.

“Iya, I’m fine by myself. You can just leave me to myself.”

Hajime tried to refuse gently.

“Hey, when we are going out of our way just to help the useless you, what are you saying? Seriously, I can’t have that. You should just stay quiet and thank us for helping you.”

As he said that, he struck Hajime in the side. Hajime jerked as a his face turned into a painful expression at the blow. At that point the Bastards Four did not hesitate to get gradually more violent with him. Although it was unavoidable since it was adolescence boys that suddenly realized they had power. Though it sucked to be the aim of their violence. Hajime had no power to resist them with. He just had to clench his teeth and bare with it.

When they arrived at an unpopulated area of the training facility that no one else had vision of. Hiyama bull rushed Hajime.

“Hey, let’s hurry up and start. It’s time for fun training.”

At this moment Hiyama, Nakano, Saito, and Kondo surrounded Hajime. Hajime just stood there and prepared himself.

“Gua!”

At that moment, he got smashed in the back from behind. Kondo hit Hajime with his sword that still had its sheath. Hajime screamed and fell down face first, but they continued to press.

“Hey, why are you sleeping? Burn~! I command thee Fire, “Kakyu (Fireball)”.”

Nakano casted “Fireball”. Hajime, who was on floor because of the blow

from Kondo, could not get up fast enough from the pain, so he desperately rolled to avoid the spell. However at this time, Saito had completed his spell.

“I command thee Wind, “Kazedama (Windball).”

The wind hit Hajime directly in the abdomen, and he fell on his back. A “blech” could be heard as Hajime vomited from the blow. The magic circle was a simple one at 10 cm in diameter.

Still there was enough power in that spell to knock out a pro boxer. The artifact was one for high aptitude and high magic power was supplied for by the Kingdom. Normally these would have been used in cooking or just making a breeze.

“Wow, so weak! Hey Nagumo, take this seriously~”

Hiyama kicked Hajime, who was crouching to vomit, in the stomach as he said this. Hajime did his best to control the feeling of vomiting welling in him.

The lynching, disguised as practice, continued for a while after that. Hajime tighten his jaw to endure the pain, while he thought in vexation to himself how weak he was. Normally at this point, even if you were no match, there would be a counterattack.

However, ever since he was small, whenever he encountered something like this, Hajime was not good at dealing with it and just backed off.

Hajime would just tell himself to endure it. He thought it was better than fighting.

While some people may think that it was very kind of Hajime, but others would think he was pathetic for it. Even Hajime wasn't sure which it was.

The pain was getting unbearable, suddenly, a girls voice filled with anger rang out.

"What are you doing?!"

When the Bastards Four heard that voice, they thought they were busted. They thought that because the voice belong to Kaori, who Hiyama liked. It wasn't just Kaori, the rest of the gang was there.

"Iya, don't get us wrong. We were just helping Nagumo practice."

"Nagumo-kun!"

Kaori totally ignored Hiyama, and Kaori rushed over to Hajime, who was coughing up a fit. The moment she saw Hajime's state, everyone else did not matter, like Hiyama.

"Practice. This is such a one-sided practice."

“Iya, that is…”

“Good excuse. Even if Nagumo can’t fight, he is a fellow classmate. Don’t do something this again.”

“If you have so much free time, go train yourselves.”

Not wanting to argue more, Hiyama and the others laughed deceptively and hastily left. Kaori healed Hajime with her healing magic.

“Thank you, Shirasaki-san. You saved me.”

Kaori just shakes her head at him while looking teary eyed.

“Have they always been doing this to you? If so, I’ll…”

Kaori’s face formed into an angry expression and glares at the direction the Bastards Four left in, Hajime stopped her.

“Iya, it’s not always like this. I’m fine, so don’t worry about it.”

“But…”

Hajime smiled at Kaori, who did not seem to be convinced. Reluctantly, Kaori decided to let it go.

“Nagumo-kun, if you need anything, don’t hesitate to ask. Kaori will agree to it.”

Shizuku said this with a wry smile as she took up Kaori’s side. Hajime just said thanks to that. However, someone decided to be a wet blanket with their Hero like quality.

“However, Nagumo should try harder. Being weak does not excuse you from trying to get stronger. If I heard correctly, after practice you just head to the library. If I was you, I would use the free time to get stronger. Nagumo, you should take this more seriously. I think Hiyama and his friends are just trying to correct your non-serious attitude.”

How do I interpret that? Hajime was just stunned by it, Kouki was just a person that believed in the good of others, so he did not see what really was going on. He did not think humans were possible of such evils. He just thought that there was a good reason for them to act that way. When he looked at it, Hajime was possibly the cause. It seemed that was his process of thought.

Kouki did not have any malice or ill intent in his thoughts. He was seriously just trying to advise Hajime. Hajime did not have the energy to try to clear the misunderstanding. He thought it would be useless to argue with someone like Kouki, who had such a strong sense of justice.

Shizuku who understood everything just sighed at that and apologized to Hajime.

“Gomenasai ne? Kouki didn’t mean any harm.”

“Ahaha, it’s okay. I understand.”

Hajime replied with a smile. He got up to wipe his dirty clothes.

“Hora, training is going to start. Let’s go.”

Hajime urges everyone to head back to the training facility. Kaori still looked worried, but Hajime decided to pretend not to notice. As expected, as a man, he did not want to be babied by a girl.

When they reached the facility, a deep sigh was released because of the events today. The future looked bleak.

* * *

After training finished, usually they would have free time until dinner, but this time Meld held them back to make an announcement. The students wondered what he would say. Meld used a deep voice to announce.

“Tomorrow, as practical training, we will be venturing into the Orcus Dungeon. All the necessary items will be prepared for, the monsters outside the capital are totally different from training so please make note of that. Get ready! For today, just rest. Dismissed.”

After saying that, he quickly left. The student were hustling and bustling at the announcement. Hajime just looked up into the sky.

(…Really bleak.)

Arifureta: Volume 1 Chapter 4

A Chat Under the Moonlight

Still not the strongest.

Wanted to convey how it felt for someone that did not get their strength so easily given to them.

* * *

Orcus Dungeon.

This was a large labyrinth that consisted of 100 levels. As one of the 8 Great Dungeons, the lower you go, the stronger the monsters become. Still, this dungeon was a very popular place for mercenaries and adventurers. This place was also a great training ground for recruits. This is because it was easy to measure the strength of the monsters by the dungeon level. The monsters also have better quality magic stone than the monsters in the wilderness.

The magic stone is the core of a monster and it is this that provides them with powers. The bigger and better quality the stone, the stronger the monster is. These stones are what is used as raw materials to make magic formulas. The magic formation can be drawn to cast the spell, but they can also be drawn with the

powder made from the magic stone. Using non-magic stone materials to make the magic circle diminishes the power by 1/3.

In brief, it was better to use the magic stone to power spells because it was more effective. In addition, a magic stone is used to make magic tools that is used in everyday life. There is a very high demand for these magic stones. Both the military and civilians needed it.

By the way, strong monsters with high quality magic stone can use special magic. Special Magic does not use magical chants or circles to perform that magic. The monsters cannot use a large variety of magic, but they do not require the incantation or circle. This special magic is the reason why monsters are dangerous.

The students and knights led by Meld arrived at the town, Horlad, that adventurers stayed at before they headed into the Dungeon. They used at an inn that was managed by the Kingdom, where recruits in training stayed at. Hajime, who had not seen a normal room in a long time, dived into the bed. All the rooms were designed for two people but only Hajime got a room to himself. He could be carefree here. He wasn't lonely by himself.

Tomorrow was the day they would challenge the dungeon. This time, they would only challenge the first 10 levels. If it is only that, even someone as weak as Hajime should be fine in behind cover. Still Hajime wanted to apologize for being a burden. Rather, he was glad to be out of the city… Hajime could not read the atmosphere.

For a while, Hajime read the monster reference book he got from the library. It was still early but he decided to sleep earlier. Hajime

had already perfected his sleeping skill in his school life. When he was about to doze off, he heard someone knock on his door. Even if it was still early for Hajime who was used to all nighters in Japan, it was about midnight for Tortus. Wha, was it Hiyama? Hajime was a little worried. However, when he heard the voice, he relaxed.

“Nagumo-kun, are you still awake? It’s me, Shirasaki. Can I bother you for a moment?”

What? For a moment he froze, but after he hurried to the door. He removed the lock and opened the door. Kaori was standing there with a snow-white negligee on.

“Say What??”

“Eh?”

When presented with such a scene, Hajime unexpectedly switched to a Kansai dialect and performed a Tsukkomi. Kaori was speechless because she didn’t hear it well. Quickly he gathered himself, he tried not to stare too much at Kaori. Although he didn’t have too much interest, he was still an adolescent boy. The current appearance of Kaori was slightly too stimulating.

“Iya, it’s nothing. Eh, what’s the matter? Did you have something to tell me?”

“No, I just wanted to talk to you. I wonder if I’m bothering you?”

“Come in.”

Most likely, he thought it was about the trip tomorrow, but Kaori quickly shot down his thoughts. The upturned eyes was so explosive. It’s super effective! She noticed the open door and invitation.

“Okay.”

Without any caution, she entered the room happily. She sat at the table near the window. Hajime unconsciously prepares the tea while still being slightly confused. Even though it was really just something like a tea bag that imitated black tea. He prepared enough for both, and handed her own. Hajime took the set across from her.

“Thank you.”

Kaori took the offered fake tea and tasted it with joy. The moonlight that shone through the window illuminates her. It seemed like there was a halo around her glossy black hair, she looked like an angel. Without any lust, Hajime was fascinated with Kaori’s purity. He recovered himself when he heard Kaori place down her cup. Hajime drank his tea to calm his mind. He choked a little as he drank too fast. How embarrassing.

Kaori giggled at his state. Hajime quickly struck a conversation to quickly hide his embarrassment.

“So, what did you want to talk about? Is it about tomorrow?”

To Hajime’s question, Kaori nodded her head. Unlike her smiling face from just a moment ago, she started to brood.

“It’s about the trip into the dungeon tomorrow. I want Nagumo-kun to stay here. I will persuade and explain to the instructors and everyone. So, please!”

She leaned over as she pleaded with Hajime. Hajime was perplexed. Even if Hajime was a burden, wasn’t this a little too much?

“Eto, I know I’m a burden…but since I’m already here I don’t think I’ll be able to just stay put.”

“You’re wrong. I don’t mean you’re a burden.”

Kaori tried to clear up the misunderstanding. Maybe I was too hasty, she thought. She put her hand on her chest and took a deep breath. It calmed her down a little. She quickly and quietly apologized.

“I just had a very bad feeling. When I was sleeping earlier, I was dreaming and you were there. When I called out to you, you did not even notice. When I chased you, I never caught up. At the

end…”

She seemed afraid to speak the rest. Wanting to hear the rest, Hajime urged her to continue.

“At the end?”

With a jerk, Kaori lifted her head. Hajime saw her teary expression, and her biting her lips.

“You disappeared.”

“I see.”

They sat in silence for a while. Hajime looks at Kaori, who was still hanging her head. It really was an ominous dream, but it was just a dream. With just that, they wouldn’t permit him to stay. If such a thing was allowed, there would be trouble from the classmates. If such a thing happened, he really would not be welcomed anymore. He had no choice but to go. To reassure Kaori, Hajime started to speak as gently as possible.

“A dream is just a dream, Shirasaki-san. This time we have Meld and his veteran knights to accompany us. A lot of strong people like Kouki are coming with us. Rather, our whole class is amazing. I actually feel sorry for our enemies. I am weak and because I have shown such weakness is probably the reason for your dreams.”

Kaori just stared at Hajime with an anxious expression, while he spoke.

“Still…Still…I’m still worried.”

“Then.”

Hajime was somewhat shy, but he stared straight into Kaori’s eyes.

“Will you protect me?”

“Eh?”

He was aware of what he was saying, and as a man saying this to her it ashamed him. His face was already red with shame. In the room that was illuminated by the moonlight. Kaori understood the situation well.

“You are a healer, right Shirasaki-san? Healer was a class that had an innate talent for healing magic. No matter what, even if I get injured, you can cure me. Will you protect me with this power? If so, I believe I’ll be fine.”

Kaori just stared at him for a bit. Hajime just endured desperately the shame that he felt, and he kept his eyes from breaking contact

with Kaori's. Even though his body was writhing.

The biggest cause of a person's insecurity is the unknown. Kaori right now, was worrying about what could possibly attack Hajime. So, it would be soothing, if they had the confidence to face the unknown that would attack him.

For a while, they stared at each other. The silence was broken when Kaori started to smile.

"You never change, Nagumo-kun."

"?"

Hajime made a doubtful expression as Kaori said that. Kaori laughed at his expression.

"Nagumo-kun, you probably think we first met in high school. I knew you since the second year of middle school."

This revelation caused Hajime to widen his eyes in shock. He quickly searched through his memories, but he couldn't recall the meeting. Hajime groaned as he thought, and this caused Kaori to giggle at him.

"It was a one-sided meeting. The first time I saw you, you were in Dogeza (Prostration). Since you were in such a position, you did

not see me.”

“Do-Dogeza!?”

Why did she see him in such an uncool time? His body writhed again, but for a different reason this time. Where and when did she see him in such a position? He frantically searched his memories. Kaori giggled as she saw Hajime make so many comedic faces.

“Yeah, you were surrounded by shady people. Even when they spit at you, poured their drinks on you, or stepped on you, you did not stop. Before long, the left appalled.”

“I showed such an unsightly sight…”

Hajime felt like dying a little. It would have been the same as if she saw him when he was still suffering from his Chunibyo. And it would have to be the worst scene in his dark past. Only a humorless smile came out. The same humorless smile that came out when he found out that his mom had found his hidden Ero doujinshi stash and placed them neatly on his bookshelf.

However, Kaori just gave him a gentle look. One that was free from contempt and ridicule.

“No, it wasn’t unsightly. Rather, when I saw you like that, I thought you were a very strong and kind person.”

“Ha?”

Hajime couldn’t believe what he heard. That’s not the kind of impression someone would have, if they saw that. Perhaps, Shirasaki-san had a special fetish for that? Hajime thought it was very rude to imagine such a thing.

“I mean, Nagumo-kun. You did it for the sake of a grandmother and her grandson.”

When she said that, Hajime finally remembered something. There was such an incident during his middle school years.

It started when the little boy accidently hit delinquents, and smashed his Takoyaki onto them. The little boy started to cry, the delinquents started to niggle the grandmother. The grandmother cowered in fear, they were in a very difficult situation.

By chance Hajime was just passing through. When the grandmother started to take out her wallet, his body moved on its own. He had never fought in his life before. He had only practice his Chunibyo Special Moves at home. It couldn’t be helped against such opponents, so he performed Dogeza. In public he did it. It was unexpectedly embarrassing for everyone there. He felt like running away. It went as planned and soon the delinquents left.

“Strong people would have solved it easily with violence. Kouki would defeat the person that was causing the trouble. But I don’t

think there are many people who would help others even when they were not strong. Especially someone that would prostate themselves for the sake of others. In fact, at that time, I was afraid. I just used the excuse that if I was strong like Shizuku, but I just stood there and did nothing. Just asking someone to save them."

"Shirasaki-san…"

"So, I believe you are the strongest person I know. When I saw you in high school, I was so happy to see you. I wanted to become like you, and get to know you. But you just fell asleep…"

"Ahaha, Sorry."

Hajime was shy and embarrassed when he knew the reason Kaori interacted with him so much. He just laughed wryly at the unexpected high opinion she held for him.

"Therefore, even if I am a little uneasy. I'll make sure you don't do anything crazy in the dungeon. Like when you faced the delinquents."

Kaori looked at Hajime with determination.

"I'll protect you, Nagumo-kun."

Hajime accepted her determination. He looked straight at her, and

nodded.

“Thank you.”

Immediately after, Hajime wryly laughed. The role of the man and woman was totally reversed. Without doubt, Kaori was playing the hero. While Hajime was playing the damsel in distress. He couldn’t help but laugh at the weird situation.

They chatted for a few moments, then Kaori returned to her room. While Hajime was laying on the bed, he thought over things. He wanted to find something he could be useful for. Hajime wanted to rid himself of his incompetence. It did not sit so well with him, that he was so dependent on others. Hajime fell asleep with renewed determination in mind.

* * *

Nobody noticed the person that was staring as Kaori left Hajime’s room. The person just had an ugly distorted expression on their face.

Arifureta: Volume 1 Chapter 5

Trap

Currently, Hajime and party is gathered around the square just in front of the Orcus Dungeon entrance.

For Hajime, he imagined a dark gloomy entrance, but the entrance looked like the entrance to a museum, heck it even had a reception desk for the entrance. There was a smiling Onee-san in uniform that was checking people who entered and left the dungeon. Apparently, this was the place people checked in with their Status Plate. Using those figures, they could record who perished in the dungeon. With the war nearing, they did not want too many casualties.

In the square near the entrance, there were many stalls there lined up. The shops were competing against each other. It was like a festival. This place was a popular area to earn a good income because people naturally gathered here. The superficial levels of the Dungeon was popular. There were many people who wanted to challenge the Dungeon, some took it seriously while others just fooled around with their lives. There seemed to be a lot of criminal activity in the back alley near the Dungeon. The country, with help from the adventurer guild, have establish operations and facilities to limit the crimes because of the pending war. This was very useful because you can buy and sell material here, and it was close to the Dungeon.

While the class was looking around like some bumpkins, they followed the duck-like mount behind Meld.

* * *

The inside of the Dungeon was totally different to the bustling of the outside. There is not much ambient light, but in front was a passage that emitted light. The passage was about 5 m high and wide, it was possible to see to some extent even without any magical light or torches. Special green stones, that were buried in the walls, emitted light to brighten the dungeon. Orcus Dungeon seemed like it had a huge vein of these green stones.

The party organized into rank and progressed forward. For a while, nothing of interest happened till they advanced into a hall. The hall was dome shaped and the ceiling looked to be around 7-8 m high. Gray fluffy balls gushed out from the cervices of the wall.

“Okay, Kouki and group step forward. Anyone else fall back! We will take shifts for the front-line. Get ready! These monsters are called Ratmen. They are that strong or dangerous, but they are quick. Take it steadily.”

Just like he said, the Ratmen jumped at them with speedily. Their scarlet eyes shined eerily between their gray hair. Their name suited them. Ratmen were bipedal and had a muscular upper body, and they had mouse-like features. Only their chest and abdomen, which had an 8 pack, was not covered in hair. It was like they were showing off their abs.

The front-line was comprised of Kouki and his party. When Shizuku, who was at the front, saw the enemy her face stiffen up. The Ratmen gave off a creepy feeling. Kouki, Shizuku, and Ryutaro

intercepted the charging Ratmen. Meanwhile, two girls that were close to Kaori started to chant. The girls were Nakamura Eri the meganekko, and Taniguchi Suzu the energetic loli. They prepare to invoke their magic. They stayed in the formation they were taught.

Kouki wielded his white shining bastard sword so quickly that it was hard to see the motions, he quickly made short work of a few enemies. His sword was one of the artifacts that the Kingdom gave to him, the “Holy Sword”. The sword had a light attribute. Any enemies caught in the light, that the sword produces, weakens and it also automatically strengthens its wielder. Even if it is “Holy”, it has such “dirty” abilities.

Ryutaro’s class was a “Fist Fighter”, so he used gauntlets and shin guards as his equipment. These were also artifacts, and they could cause shock-waves. They were also believed to be unbreakable. Ryutaro takes a imposing stance and does not let any enemy pass by him with carefully placed kicks and punches. Though he had no shield, he acted like a heavy armored tank.

Shizuku, who was like a Samurai girl, with her “Swordswoman” class and sword that was like the mixture of a Shamshir and a Katana. Took a battojutsu stance and drew her sword. All the enemies were cut in an instant. The draw was so refined, that the knights were dazzled by it.

While the other students were fascinated by Kouki’s party’s battle, a chant resounded.

“”””Swirling Dark Flames, Incinerate My Enemies, Return them to the Earth as Ashes, “Spiral Flame”.”””””

Three people simultaneously casted it, and three spiraling flames engulfed the Ratmen. The Ratmen gave out a death cry as the flames turned them to ashes.

They noticed that all the Ratmen were wiped out. The other students didn't get a turn. It seemed like that the enemies on the first level were too weak for Kouki's party.

"Yeah, Good Job! Next time you guys try it, don't lower your guard though."

Meld warned not to let up, but he smiled at the prowess the students showed. However, the tension from their first experience at encountering monsters in a dungeon could not be stopped. The students faces broke out into smiles. Meld just shrugged his shoulders at their reactions.

"Although this is a training exercise, don't forget to keep in mind about Magic Stones. Since it's obviously overkill."

At Meld's words the people in Kaori's group that casted the spell blushed.

There were no particular problems from there, they repeated battles in the same manner. Everything was going well in the lower levels. Eventually, they arrived at the 20th floor, which is the mark of a first-class adventurer. The highest level explored was the 65th floor for Orcus Dungeon. This achievement was done by

adventurers over 100 years ago. Getting to the 40th level is considered Elite first-class. Those who passed the 20th level was considered first-class. Since all the students were cheats, they easily broke through to the 20th level, even if they did not have much experience.

Traps were the scariest feature of a Dungeon. In some instances, the traps were lethal. There was something called Fair Scope for the lower levels. This is a gadget that detected traps by feeling flow of magic. Because most traps in a dungeon use magic, the Fair Scope can detect more than 80% of traps. The detecting range is somewhat narrow, so experience or information was needed to progress smoothly.

Therefore, they were able to quickly breeze through the floors. This was mainly because of how earnestly the Knights guided them. Meld especially mentioned to them that if they did not know the layout, check for the traps. If they were not sure if traps were around, move with caution.

“All right, you guys. From this point on, not only will there be other types of demons but they will work together to attack us. Do not get careless just because it had been easy so far! After we clear the 20th level, it will be it for today! Get fired up!”

Meld’s undertone in his message resounds with everyone. Up to this point, Hajime had not done anything in particular. Once, he practiced on a monster that the knights had weakened. He created a pitfall for the monster to fall into, and stabbed it with a sword. Until now, he had only defeated one dog-like monster.

No one wanted him in their party. Basically, he just stood behind

the cover provided by the knights. It was pretty pathetic. However, by repeatedly using his “Synergy” skill in combat he could improve his magical power. His magical power raised by 2 points, it seemed actual combat was useful.

(Still, I’m totally a parasite player…)

Again, a weakened monster was thrown to Hajime by the Knight that weakened it. When it approached, Hajime transmuted the ground and breathed out a sigh. With it restrained, Hajime swung his sword to strike down the monster.

(Well, it seems like my precision with transmutation has gone up. Let’s do our best step-by-step.)

He consumed a magic replenishing pill, as he wiped the sweat of his brow. Hajime had not noticed, but there were some knights that were impressed with him.

The knight did not expect anything from him in the beginning. In battle however he dared to fight against the demons and do not just stand around. Of course, weakened monsters.

For the knights, they thought Hajime would fight using his barely used sword. Hajime choose to use his transmutation to seal their movements. He brought down decisive blows on the monsters with a reliably strategy that the Knights had never seen before. “Synergist” was considered as a crafting class. They had never thought of using the transmutation skill like that in combat.

Since he did not have anything else, Hajime thought about transmuting his weapon. He thought that if he could manipulate minerals, why can't he manipulate the ground? Since he was surrounded by so many strong people, and him just defeating a few, he felt useless. This was his first public exhibition of his tactic. When his impotence was shown in the combat training in the capital, he came up with this tactic.

They stopped for a short rest. He looked forward and met eyes with Kaori. She looked towards Hajime and smiled at him. Kaori seemed to be keeping an eye on him after last night's declaration to "protect" him. This caused Hajime to be embarrassed and he broke eye contact. Her expression sulked slightly at that. Shizuku who had been observing what was going on with a wry smile on her face, she asked in a small voice.

"Kaori, why are you two constantly looking at each other? You can't be considering a romantic comedy in the Dungeon, no time for that."

Kaori blushed at the teasing. She refuted Shizuku angrily.

"Mou, Shizuku-chan. Don't say strange things. I was just wondering if Nagumo-kun was alright. That's it!"

Shizuku knew it wasn't like that, but she kept her mouth shut. She didn't want to say anything that might upset her more. Though she couldn't hide the laughter in her eyes. Kaori saw that and just sulked at it.

Hajime just side glance at their state, suddenly he felt a gaze. The unpleasant gaze was full with negative emotions and seemed to be glued to him. Hajime was not unfamiliar with such stares in the classroom, but this was feeling could not compare, it was so grave.

It was not the first time today that he felt that gaze. Since the morning he had felt this stare. When he tried to locate the stare, it would disappear. Hajime was tired of it, after having it repeated so many times.

(I wonder what it is…did I do something? I thought I was doing my best even if I was incompetent. I wonder if that's the cause? I'm not getting arrogant! Target?)

Hajime breathed out a deep sigh. He started to feel the bad feelings Kaori mentioned.

The party searches the 20th level. Each level of the Dungeon was several kilometers in each direction. It would take dozens of people several months to map out an unknown level. 47 levels have been mapped properly, so it was not that easy to get lost. There was not a big worry of getting caught in a trap.

The innermost room of the 20th level had a very complicated geographical feature. The walls were protruding like a stalactite cave and icicles formed around the room. The stairs to the 21st floor was just ahead of this room. If they reached that point, the training would be done for the day. In ancient times they were able to wield transportation type magic, but at the current age such means was impossible. They must head back the old fashion way.

The party relaxed slightly, since the walls were protruding they had to advance in a column.

After a bit, Kouki's party and Meld that was in the front stopped. The classmates who were keen, got into their fighting stance.

"They're camouflage!. Make sure to pay attention to your surroundings!"

Meld advised them. The wall suddenly rose and discolored a bit. The body that was camouflaged was now dark brown, and they stood on 2 legs. It raised its chest and started to pound on it like a drum. When they took a good look at it, it was a gorilla-like demon with a camouflage ability.

"Rockmounts! Be careful of their arms, they are strong!"

Meld yelled echoed in the cave-like room. Kouki's party went to engage them. Ryutaro was able to reflect the blow that came from a Rockmount. Kouki and Shizuku try to surround the beast. They could not position themselves because the terrain layout was too obstructive.

When the Rockmount felt that he could not pass by Ryutaro, it withdraw a bit and inhaled a deep breath.

"GuGaGaGaaaaa——!!""

The intense roar vibrated the whole room.

“Gu!?”

“Uwa!?”

“Kya!?”

A shock ran through their bodies, it did not damage them, but it froze them. This was Rockmount’s Special Magic “Intimidating Roar”. The roar carried the magic that caused the temporary paralysis.

Kouki’s vanguard took the roar almost point-blank, this caused them to freeze momentarily. The Rockmount took this gap in defense to attack, it lifted a boulder and threw it at Kaori’s rear guard. A stunning shot-put form was executed by it. The rock flew towards Kaori, and the frozen vanguard could not move to stop it.

Kaori and her partners ready the magic wands they had, to intercept the boulder. There was not enough room to dodge it. However, the moment they were going to activate their magic, all of them involuntarily were stunned at the sight before them.

The boulder that was thrown was another Rockmount. Nearing Kaori’s group, it did a stunning rotation and expanded its arms. It’s

appearance was like a Rune Diver. A voice saying “Ka-o-ri-chan～!” could almost be heard. Strangely, its eyes were bloodshot and its breathing was rough. Kaori, Eri, and Susu unintentionally screamed and stopped their magic.

“Hey! What are you doing in a battle”

In a hurry, Meld went to slay the Rockmount that was still in the dive. The girls apologized, but the bad feeling was still there. Their face had paled.

There a person that got mad at such a situation. Our very own mass of justice, Amanokawa Kouki.

“Bastard…You dare treat them like that…I won’t forgive you!”

Kouki seemed to have misunderstood why the girls were pale and feeling bad, he thought they were afraid of their impending death. To frighten girls like that! Indescribably, small signs of anger surfaced on Kouki. His “Holy Sword” seemed to shine in response to his feelings.

“Myriad of Soaring Wings, Reach the Heavens, “Soaring Flash””

“Ah, this fool!”

Ignoring Meld’s voice, Kouki brandished his sword over his head

and swung down in one motion. His chant had made the sword emit an intense light, the slash released the light. Drawing a curve, the light bisected the Rockmount without encountering any resistance. The blade of light continued on until it destroyed the back wall.

Debris lightly fell from the damaged wall. Kouki exhaled and gave the girls a sparkling smile. He had defeated the monster that scared them. It's alright now! About to give credit to his voice, he was approached by a smiling Meld who smack him.

"Ow!?"

"You fool. I understand how you feel, but you shouldn't use such a technique in such a narrow place. If it collapse, what are you going to do?"

At Meld's rebuke, he choked. Kouki tried to apologize. The girls approached him and gave him a strained smile to try to comfort him.

At that moment, the collapsed wall caught Kaori's attention.

"What is that? It's sparkling."

Everyone looked at the wall Kaori was mentioning. There blooming on the wall were minerals that radiated pale light. It was like a crystal covered in indicolite. The girls were enchanted by the

beautiful sight of the crystals.

“Oh, that’s Grantz Crystal. A one this big in size is rare.”

When talking about Grantz Crystal, it was like an ore that was like a jewel. The crystal did not have any special effects, but it’s cool and sparkling appearance is popular among the ladyship. Rings, earrings, pendants, and other jewelry have it set into them and it’s very well received. The jewel is one of the top 3 chooses for proposal rings.

“Lovely…”

Enchanted, Kaori’s cheeks blushed. Hajime and Shizuku were the only ones who noticed this.

“If that’s the case, I’ll retrieve it!”

The one who announced that and abruptly moved toward it was Hiyama. He approached the wall and quickly reached towards the crystal. Meld panicked at that.

“Kora! Don’t just do what you want! We haven’t confirmed if it’s safe!”

Hiyama pretended not to hear and finally arrived in front of the crystal. Meld chased after Hiyama to stop him. At that moment,

one of the knight finished his analysis with the Fair Scope. He paled at the result.

“Commander! It’s a trap!”

“Tsu!?”

However their warnings came too late. The moment Hiyama touched the Grantz Crystal, magic started to spread from the crystal. The trap was set for people who became so fascinated with the crystal that they would touch it carelessly. There’s a good story about this. It’s the way of the world.

In a blink of an eye, the magic circle spread throughout the whole room, and it gradually shined brighter. It was like a replication of the magic that summoned them.

“Withdraw! Get out of this room this instant!”

At Meld’s insistence, everyone started to clear the room in a hurry, but they weren’t fast enough. When the light filled the room, everyone momentary felt a floating sensation. The students felt the change in atmosphere. They were slammed onto the ground with a thud.

With the increasing pain on his butt caused by the fall, Hajime looked at the surrounding. Same as Hajime, his classmates fell on their backside. Meld, the knights, and Kouki’s party quickly stood

up and observed their surroundings. Seems like the earlier magic was a transportation type magic. Since such magic was not possible with current magic, it was most likely an ancient magic.

They were all transferred onto a huge bridge made of stone. Approximately it was 100m in length. The ceiling looked to be about 20 m. There was no river passing by underneath the bridge, because of the darkness nothing else could be seen. It felt like there were in an abyss.

The width of the bridge was about 10m, but there were not even handrails. If you slipped there would be nothing to grab onto, and you would fall head-first. The group was right in the middle of the bridge. On both sides of the bridge, they could see a passage that led to a stairway that ascended to the upper level.

When he confirmed it, Meld issued out orders with a grim expression.

“You guys, get up there immediately, go towards the stairs. Hurry!”

Quickly the students moved. However, a trap in a dungeon was not going to be so easy, the retreat wasn’t that easy. Monsters emerged from the magic circles that appeared on both sides of the bridge. On one side was a huge monster. The other had a large amount of monsters.

Meld started at the huge demon and just whispered…

“No way…a Behemoth.”

Arifureta: Volume 1 Chapter 6

Behemoth

[TL: Traum = Dream [in German]

* * *

On both sides of the bridge, a magical formation that emitted crimson light appeared. The magic circle on the aisle side is close to 10 m. The one on the stairs side is around 1 m, but the numbers are numerous.

From the smaller countless magic circles came monsters that were sword-toting skeletons, these were called “Traum Soldier”. Their eyes were the same color as the magic circle, it sparkled and shine while they looked around. 100 Traum Soldier have already been summoned and yet the numbers were still increasing.

Even though there were so many skeleton Soldiers on this side, the other side’s monster was what caused Hajime’s danger sense to go haywire. From the 10 m magical circle, a quad pedal demon 10 m long with some sort of helmet on its head, spawned from it. If compared to any animal Hajime knew of, the closest would be a Triceratops. However, it’s eyes shone crimson, while percussing it’s sharp claws and fangs, flames gathered around the horns on its helmet.

Meld just whispered out “Behemoth”. At that moment, the Behemoth took a deep breath and let out a deafening roar.

“Gurua~a~a~aaaaa!!”

“Tsu!?”

The roar caused Meld’s senses to return, he quickly started to issue commands to everyone.

“Alan! Lead the students to the stair and break through those Traum Soldiers! Kyle, Ivan, Gale! I need you guys to extend the best barriers you can! Stop it! Kouki, hurry and get to the stairs!”

“Wait a moment, Meld-san! We’ll help! That dinosaur-like monster is the most dangerous!? We’ll…”

“Fool! That’s a real Behemoth, at your current strength it’s impossible! It’s a 65th level demon. Once a long time ago, the “Strongest” known adventurer battled it and were unable to defeat it. Hurry up and go! I can’t let you guys die!”

Even Meld’s expression faltered for a moment at the daunting monster in front of him. “I can’t just abandon you guys!” was Kouki’s response as he stood his ground. At the moment when Meld tried to reason with Kouki to retreat, the Behemoth roared and started to charge at them. At this rate, the students who were retreating would get trampled to death.

To prevent it, the strongest of Haihiri's military spawned multiple full powered barriers.

“”””Repel all Malice and Enmity, Absolute Providence from the Son of God, Herein a Sanctuary, You Shall Not Pass, “Absolute Virtue”””””

The magical formula for this spell was engraved in the highest quality paper 2 m wide. The incantation having 4 phrases to activate it. 3 of the Warrior's casted it simultaneously. A barrier manifested that could stop anything for 1 minute. The hemispherical barrier shined pure-white as it stop the Behemoth's charge.

The moment the Behemoth clashed with the barrier, a shockwave erupted from between them. The whole bridge shook at the shockwave, and everything around the Behemoth's feet were pulverized. The retreating students scream and tumbled at the artificial quake.

Traum Soldier were monsters that showed up on the 38th level. They were heads above anything they encountered so far. The students panicked as they were sandwiched by a monstrous demon in the back and an eerie army of skeletons in the front.

They advanced reckless, without giving care to keeping rank, and aimed for the stairs. Alan, tried to calm them down desperately, no one listed because of the imminent terror. One of the school girls was pushed from behind and fell down. She groaned as she lifted her head to see before her a Traum soldier brandishing it's sword.

“Ah.”

The soldier swung it’s sword down towards her.

She thought she was going to die at that moment, but suddenly the Traum Solider feet were up heaved. Losing its balance the trajectory of the blade missed the girl and struck the ground instead. Furthermore, the upheaval continued like a wave towards the end of the bridge, tripping up many Traum Soldiers along the way. This caused some of the Soldiers to fall into the abyss.

2m off of the edge of the bridge in a crouched position was Hajime as he exhaled heavily. He was continuously transmuting the ground. Like a ground slide, the monsters on the bridge were guided off into the abyss. Unaware, his proficiency in transmuting got better because he constantly used it. The range of his transmuting also seemed to have increased.

While drinking a mana potion, Hajime quickly approached the girl that fell down. He helped the girl up. Hajime spoke to the still stunned girl with a smile.

“Hurry Forward. It’s alright, if you calm down these skeletons are nothing. Because except for me, everyone else is a cheat!”

Hajime pat her on the back with full confidence, the next moment she uttered a quick energetic “Thank you”.

Hajime had ruined the surrounding Traum Soldiers' footing and had them detained, he took that moment to survey the battlefield. Everyone was in such a panic that they were fighting without any thought and looked so sloppy. At this rate, it was highly likely that someone would die. Alan is still trying to organize them, but it is not going well. More reinforcements came for the Traum Soldiers through the new magic circles.

"We need a strong leader to guide us, Amanokawa-kun!"

Hajime started to sprint towards Kouki's party.

Behemoth was still repeatedly charging the barrier. A powerful shock-wave was produced everything it collided with the barrier, the bridge groaned at the pressure. There were already cracks in the barrier and it was only a matter of time before it gave. Meld had joined in the reinforcement of the barrier but it was like adding a drop into a bucket.

"Ah, Crap! It won't hold for much longer! Kouki, hurry and retreat! You guys go too!"

"No! I will not abandon you guys! We will all survive this!"

"Ku, to be so egotistical at this moment…"

Meld just displayed a sour face at their conversation. In such a narrow space, it would be very difficult to avoid the Behemoth's rush. Therefore, the best option was to withdraw because without the barrier they would be trampled. Such a subtle perception of the situation could only come with experience, it was highly unlike for Kouki and his party to have such an insight.

Meld was urging than to withdraw, but with a heavily summarized explanation on why. Kouki did not take his advise and refused to "abandon" them. Also from the look in Kouki's eyes he wanted to challenge the Behemoth.

It could be attributed to his adolescent mind. He was overestimating himself, because he had so much praise showered onto him.

"Kouki! Listen to what Meld is saying and retreat!"

Shizuku, who understood the situation, grabbed Kouki's arm in remonstration.

"This is not the first time Kouki is unreasonable! I'll back you up!"

"Thanks, Ryutaro!"

Ryutaro's statement just fueled Kouki's attitude even more. Shizuku clicked her tongue at that.

“Don’t get intoxicated with the situation! Bakamono!”

“Shizuku-chan”

Kaori is worried for the irritated Shizuku.

A boy jumped out in front of Kouki.

“Amanokawa-kun”

“Na-Nagumo!?”

“Nagumo-kun!?”

Everyone was surprised by how serious Hajime was.

“Hurry and retreat! You have to help everyone!”

“Why so sudden? What are you even doing in a place like this? This is not a place you should be at! Just leave this to us, Nagumo…”

“Is this the situation to say such a thing?”

Hajime showed such unexpected force in his words that Kouki stopped his rebuke. Until now, they had never heard Hajime use such a harsh tone. He had always presented himself with a smile and now seeing such an image was shocking.

“Can you not see what is going on? Everyone is in a panic, because their leader is missing!”

Hajime pointed towards the students while one hand grabbed onto Kouki’s chest. In the direction he pointed at, there was his confused classmates being surrounded by Traum Soldiers. The training that was drilled into them was nowhere to be seen, they fought willy nilly. Since they were so inefficient they were being overwhelmed by the reinforcements. Although their high stats were protecting them for now, soon it would not matter.

“We need a blow that can break through them! A power to erase the fear in everyone’s hearts! And it’s you who has such a power! Don’t just look in front of you, look at what’s going on behind you too!”

Stunned at seeing his classmates in chaos, the shaking Kouki nodded his head.

“I understand! I’ll go immediately. Sorry, Meld-san!

“Go!”

The moment Meld looked back at Kouki’s agreement to retreat, the barrier finally fell to the Behemoth’s onslaught. The raging shock-wave caused by the destruction of the barrier, was shooting straight for Hajime and the others. Hajime quickly stepped forward and transmuted a wall, but it was easily brushed aside. It seemed he had weakened it. Dust whirled as the Behemoth bellowed out a roar.

On the ground was Meld and three of his knights groaning. Their body seemed to have taken damage from the shock-wave, they were unable to move. Kouki and his party had fallen over, but quickly they recovered. Hajime’s wall had been useful for those behind Meld.

“Ryutaro, Shizuku can you buy me some time?”

Though they were in some pain, the two of them pressed forward at Kouki’s request. Since Meld had been disabled, it was up to them to do something.

“I’ll do what I can!”

“Somehow, I’ll do it!”

Both of them rushed the Behemoth.

“Kaori, start healing Meld and his men.”

“Okay.”

Kaori quickly went to work. Hajime was already beside Meld. He quickly created a stone wall to prevent the affects of battle from reaching them. Although it seemed useless when looking at the battle, it was better than nothing.

Kouki at the moment had been gathering himself and chanting to perform his best skill.

“Divine will! Perish all evils with your light! The breath of God! Blow away the ominous clouds and purify this world! The mercy of God! Forgive all sins with this strike! “Heaven’s Might”!”

An aurora gushed out from the “Holy Sword” after the chant. The skill was similar to the “Soaring Flash”, but it’s power was on a completely different level. It paved a gouge in the bridge as it shot towards the Behemoth, shaking the bridge with its might. After the chant, Ryutaro and Shizuku had already cleared out. However, after fighting the Behemoth they were in a tattered state. To suffer such a considerable amount of damage in such a short time.

The bombardment of light hit the Behemoth directly. Light filled the area where the spell had impacted with the demon. An earthquake resounded in the bridge, and cracks spawned all over it.

“If it’s this…Ha-a Ha-a”

“Did that do it?”

“I hope so.”

Ryutaro and Shizuku returned to Kouki’s side. Kouki breathed heavily after using such an enormous amount of magic. That skill earlier, was his trump card. Most of his magic was used to fuel it. Kaori had finished treating the fallen Soldiers and Meld was actively trying to stand up.

When the light and dust settled down…

There it was, an unscathed Behemoth.

The beast sent a death glare at Kouki and growled. It raised its head, there was a high pitch then it’s horns started to glow red hot. Magma, that word described perfectly what the Behemoth’s helmet looked like.

“Don’t just stand there! Move!”

Meld’s voice helped the them regain their senses and they started to move. The Behemoth soon rushed them with his newly powered

helmet. Like a falling meteorite the Behemoth fell helmet first towards Kouki.

Even if they were able to avoid it by jumping aside, the shock-wave caused by the impact still blew them away. When they stopped rolling, they had wounds all over their bodies. Meld, who finally regained his movement, rushes over. The other knights were still being treated by Kaori. Bracing itself, the Behemoth worked to pull out his stuck head.

“Can you guys move?”

All he got in response were groans. They were probably paralyzed again by the shock-wave caused by the falling Behemoth. The damage to the internal organs seemed to be significant.

Meld called out to Kaori. When he was looking for Kaori, Meld’s sight caught hold of Hajime.

“Bozu! Take Kaori, Carry Kouki and retreat!”

For Meld who directed such instructions to Hajime, He would only be able to carry Kouki. That instruction indicated that, no one else would be able to escape. Meld clenched his teeth and prepared his shield. He had chosen to risk his life in this dangerous situation to hold back the beast.

At such a desperate moment for Meld, Hajime made a suggestion.

This method may be the only way that everyone would be saved. However, the chance of it succeeding was very low. Hajime would also be in the most dangerous position.

Meld hesitated, but the Behemoth was already combat ready. It's helmet started to sizzle red hot. They had no time.

"Are you going to do it?"

"I'll do it!"

Meld could easily see the resolute gaze Hajime had, and he couldn't help himself from smiling.

"I can't believe that I'll entrust it up to you, I'll surely save you. Leave it to you!"

"Hai!"

Meld headed towards the Behemoth at that. He released a simple magic to provoke it. The Behemoth seemed to have a habit of targeting anyone who was attacking him at the moment. Man and Beast gazed at each other.

When the helmet was finally inflamed, it charged then leapt. Meld stood there poised, intending to provoke it till the last moment. At that moment, a small incantation could be heard.

“Blow “Wind Wall”!”

He back stepped at the same time as he chanted. Like a comet, the Behemoth landed at the area where Meld was previously stationed at. The “Wind Wall” was able to deflect the shock-wave and debris from the impact. Since it was just a simple attack, he was able to avoid it. He would have been totally annihilated if he was protecting Kouki.

Again, the Behemoth’s head was stuck after the attack. Hajime advanced at this, but the remnants of the blazing heat burns Hajime. He endured the pain and he started to chant. It couldn’t really be considered a chant because he just called out the spell’s name.

“Transmute.”

The Behemoth’s movement to extract it’s head from the stone was stopped because the surrounding stone buried its head. No matter how much stone it destroyed to free itself, Hajime just repaired it with his transmuting. Bracing it’s legs, the Behemoth was going to forcefully free itself, but Hajime transmuted around the foot this time. He constantly harden and transmuted the stone and finally he sunk the beast 1 m into stone. The Behemoth’s power was so terrifying that if he let up for just a moment, cracks would from in the formation and it would try to slip out. In order to prevent this Hajime did not let up on his continuous transmuting. He observed the Behemoth struggling to get free with its head buried underground. For anyone else it would have looked very silly.

In the meantime, Kaori and the recovered knights were gathered and carried Kouki's party back. On the side with the Traum Soldiers, the students had regained some of their composure and started to cooperate with each other. The reason for the recovery was because of the girl Hajime saved earlier. A simple contribution from Hajime.

"Wait! There is still Nagumo-kun."

Kaori protested to Meld who was withdrawing.

"This is his plan! We are going to clear the Soldiers and make a safety zone for ourselves, and then we will bombard the beast with magic! Of course, we will allow him to retreat too! He can retreat when our magic barrage holds that beast in place, then we can retreat to the upper level."

"Then, I'll stay and help him!"

"Not possible! Your healing is needed to back up Kouki as we retreat!"

"But!"

Meld shouted at the protesting Kaori.

"Don't let his effort be in vain!"

“Tsu!?”

Including Meld, the other one with the highest power was without a doubt Kouki. If she did not use her healing magic effectively, they may eventually lack the power to stop the Behemoth. That is why it is necessary for her to join the retreating group. They did not have to time to stop and heal with other slower means, and if they were not fast enough Hajime will run out of mana to trap the Behemoth.

“Breath of Heaven, Fill to the brim, Purify and Heal, “Heaven’s Blessing”!”

Even if she had a face like she wanted to cry, she continued with her incantation. A pale light engulfed Kouki. The restorative property of her magic healed his body of injuries at the same time it enveloped him. Meld placed a hand on Kaori’s shoulder and nodded, and she nodded back. Again, Kaori turned around to look at the scene of Hajime transmuting against the Behemoth. All of them started to retreat after that.

The numbers of the Traum Soldier was still increasing. Currently, they numbered around 200. They all filled up the stair side of the bridge. But in a sense it might be a good thing. If a gap was present, the students would try to push through, but their lack of experience would lead them into getting surrounded and slaughtered. Actual this was a good number for the students who were having trouble with the 100 earlier.

Lucky, there had not been a single death, it was thanks to the

earnest knights who protected them. It was not an exaggeration to say that they were desperately covering the students' lives. The expense came in the form of all the wounds they had acquired.

If they lost the knights' support, for the increasing number of students who were panicking and did not know the magic that caused the increasing monsters, they would fall apart in minutes.

Despair struck the students who realized it. The group that cooperated with the girl that Hajime saved earlier, even though they fought bravely their face conveyed that they were at their limits. When they thought it was finished…

"Soaring Flash!"

A pure-white slash exploded right through the ranks of Traum Soldiers. The Soldiers near the side edges of the bridge was blown into the abyss. After the slash thought, the remaining Soldiers filled in the gap that was created by the skill. They surely saw the stair that led to the upper level though. The wished to see it but it had been covered by the sea of swords.

"Everyone! Don't give up, I'll open up a path!"

He spewed those lines as the "Soaring Flash" tore through the enemies. The students energized at the charisma Kouki displayed.

"What have you guys been doing this whole time? Remember your

training, and start cooperating with each other! Fools!”

The leader everyone relied on released a skill that was not inferior to “Soaring Flash” at the enemies. The reliably feeling returned to his voice. His body filled with power and his mind cleared. Kaori’s magic was doing their job, the magic to calm the mind. The magic was just a relaxation magic but combined with Kouki’s performance it was super effective.

Anyone with an aptitude for healing started to heal everyone. The people with high aptitude for magic made up the rear guard, they started their chants. The vanguard formed a firm rank, they steadily moved but put an emphasis in protecting the rear guard.

The knights who recovered also join them, then the signal for their counter-attack came. The cheat class started to perform their martial arts and magic, they descended down on their enemy like a surging wave. Monsters fell so quickly that they had finally passed the spawning rate of the magic circle.

Soon, the path to the stairs were opened.

“Everyone advance! We need to secure the stairs!”

Kouki started to run as soon as he shouted. The recovered Shizuku and Ryutaro accompanied Kouki in the charge. They cut through the encircling Traum Soldier like a hot knife through butter. Finally, they broke through the besiegement. Kouki quickly cast his magic to prevent the gap from the bridge they just created from being filled by the Soldiers.

The classmates looked doubtful. It will be like that. In front of them were the stairs, and naturally they wanted to get to safety quickly.

“Wait everyone! We still have to save Nagumo-kun! Just by himself, he has been suppressing that demon!”

Kaori’s class faced her with a very doubtful expression. They all thought it was impossible, because they all thought he was useless. When the perplexed classmates looked over at the bridge, Hajime was really there.

“What is he doing?”

“That demon is buried!”

Meld answered the questions the students had.

“It’s true! It was because of him stopping that demon that we could retreat! Vanguard don’t let any soldier near us! Rear guard prepare your long range magic! He is about to run out of magic, we will have him retreat while we bombard the Behemoth!”

The students braced themselves when that voice resounded with them. There were people who looked at in the direction of the stairs in regret. No wonder, they just had a near death experience.

They naturally wanted to get to safety as fast as possible. However, when Meld angrily shouted out to hurry up, they returned to the battlefield.

In there was Hiyama Daisuke. Although he thought so highly of himself, he was really scared, he wanted to run as fast as possible away.

At that moment, the scene from that day flashed in his mind. It was yesterday when they were staying in Horlad. He was so overcome by anxiety of the next day that he couldn't sleep properly and went out to get some air then headed for the toilet. The cool breeze relaxed him and he was returning to his room when he saw something. Along the way, he had seen Kaori in her negligee. This was the first time he had seen her in such a state and he instinctively hid and held his breath at such a sight. Kaori passed by without noticing him.

Daisuke was interested and followed her, until she stopped in front of a certain room and knocked. The one to answer the door was… Hajime. Hiyama's mind blanked at that. He liked Kaori, however he thought that he was not good enough for her. When comparing himself to Kouki, he felt like he was way out of his league, so he gave up.

Hajime was different, Daisuke thought Hajime was inferior to him. So to find Hajime in the presence of Kaori was weird. He thought that if this was the case, why won't he do? Daisuke heard every word in his head, is his head alright? Hiyama seriously thought that though. His dissatisfaction against Hajime had always been piling up, now this had swelled into hatred. When he saw Kaori get mesmerized by the Grantz Crystal, he was probably driven by these feelings.

Hiyama remembered all that. Looking at Hajime who was suppressing the Behemoth by himself, Kaori staring worried for Hajime and even praying for him…a dark smile bloomed on Daisuke's face.

Hajime felt his mana running out, and he had ran out of any potions. He quickly surveyed his surrounding and noticed that everyone had retreated. Ranks were being formed and magic was being prepared for the last part of the plan.

Behemoth was still struggling, at this rate there were still a few seconds of intermission even if he stopped transmuting. In the meantime he had to get some distance. A drop of sweat entered his eye. Hajime had never been in such a situation that caused his heart to thump so loudly that he could hear it. Timing was going to be important here.

Dozens of cracks formed in the restraints that held the Behemoth, and they were failing to hold it back. At the same moment, Hajime started to sprint.

5 seconds after Hajime started to run away, the Behemoth fully freed itself and roared. The rage present in its eyes could never be misunderstood. Quickly it's vision searched for its sworn enemy and found Hajime. Behemoth roared in anger again , and collected power into its legs to chase after Hajime.

However, a barrage of magic attacks stopped it.

Like shooting stars painting the night sky, magic of countless colors bombarded the Behemoth. There was no damage, but the force prevented it from advancing.

Hajime lowered his head and dashed while taking care not to fall. With all those lethal spells passing over his head, Hajime was not afraid for his life. There was no way those cheats would be able to miss. The distance between the Behemoth and him was also 30m.

Hajime relaxed at that.

However, something happened that cause him to freeze.

One of the “Fireball” in the endless stream of spells, bent slightly and started to head his way. This was clearly aimed at him.

(Why!?)

Doubt and bewilderment, all of this ran through his brain and it appalled him.

Hajime slid and braced himself as the “Fireball” struck the ground right in front of his eyes. He was blown back the way he came from by the shock-wave. No real damage was taken because he was able to avoid a direct hit, but his sense of balance was thrown out of whack. Seems like semicircular canal was damaged.

Standing up was a little hard because he was dizzy. The Behemoth like usual was not going to go down alone. When Hajime got up, the beast roared again. Hajime looked at the Behemoth and was stunned by the piercing eyes it had. For the third time it's horns started to and he lunged towards Hajime.

The unsteady head, hazy vision, looming Behemoth, impatience screams and roars from his classmates in the distance.

Hajime tried desperately to muster the strength to jump away. A furious shock ripped through the entire bridge, it shocked from the strength of the Behemoth's attack. Cracks spread out from the epicenter. The bridge screamed.

Finally, after all that punishment, the bridge collapsed.

The bridge had finally reached the threshold and gave out.

"Guaaa!"

Behemoth clawed desperately to find a place to hold on to. However even the ground that connected the bridge collapsed and fell into the abyss. Death throes could be heard from the Behemoth.

Hajime crawled to escape somehow, however every place he held onto collapsed.

“Ah, it’s no good…”

While he thought that, he turned his gaze towards his classmates. He saw Shizuku and Kaori holding Kaori back, like she wanted to jump after him. His other classmates were pale and had their hands over their eyes or mouths. Meld and the Knights had a mortifying expression on their faces.

The scaffolding that held Hajime finally crumbled. He fell backwards into the dark abyss, while he tried to grasp the dimming light.

Arifureta: Volume 1 Chapter 7

Wretched Malice

The death throes that the Behemoth echoed soon ceased. The stone bridge made a huge rattling noise as it crumbled. Hajime disappeared into the abyss along with the rubble. That sight, played for Kaori in slow motion and it filled her with despair.

In her head, last night's event repeatedly played in her mind. In the room illuminated by the moonlight, she sat here chatting with Hajime while they drank the fake black tea. That was the first time they had talked so in depth with each other. Being driven by her nightmares, she paid a sudden visit to Hajime. Even if he was surprised, he had talked to her truthfully. After a bit, she noticed that talking to him had erased her uneasiness.

She returned to her room in a jubilant mood. When she arrived back at her room, she noticed how boldly she was dress and she writhe in shame. Kaori felt depressed because Hajime had not even reacted, in her eyes, to her looks. She felt she had no appeal. When Kaori saw Shizuku caught her making funny facial expression, she wanted to pretend it never happened.

On that night, the most important occurrence was the promise she made to "protect Hajime". The promise that Hajime mentioned to relieve Kaori of her anxiety. Hajime disappeared into the abyss, as she stared at him. She kept recalling that memory over and over again.

Somewhere in the distance, a scream can be heard. When Kaori noticed that the voice belonged to her, she grimaced as she was quickly brought back to reality.

“Let me go! If I don’t go to Nagumo-kun! I promised! I will…I said I will protect him! Let me go!”

Shizuku and Kouki had to restrain her, because Kaori looked like she would just jump after him. Kaori displayed such extraordinary power that they wondered where she got such power and how could she display such an amount with her slender body. Unlucky for them, she used that power to break free from them.

If she kept struggling like this, she might damage her body. Nevertheless, they could absolutely couldn’t let her go. If they released her, she would jump off the cliff. She did not have her usual calmness, not even a shadow of it, now she had such a frantic expression. No, it might be heartbreaking to say.

“Kaori! You can’t! Kaori!”

Because Shizuku could understand Kaori’s feelings, she could not find the right words to say. All she could do was call out her name desperately.

“Kaori! Are you also trying to die? It’s too late for Nagumo! Calm Down! You’ll hurt yourself!”

Kouki tried to best to convey how worried he was of her. To the confused Kaori that was here and now, these were not the words to say to her.

“What do you mean “too late”? Nagumo-kun is not dead yet! If I don’t go, he is surely asking for assistance!”

Nagumo Hajime was not savable, at least this is what everyone else thought. He fell from the cliff into that dark abyss. The composure to accept that reality, the present Kaori did not have it. If anyone was to word it though, she would just deny it over and over again. Ryutaro and the other students did not what to do, so they stood there flustered.

At that moment, Meld approached them and struck Kaori in the back of her neck without saying anything. She jerked for a moment, then unconsciousness claimed her. Kouki held the now limp Kaori, and glared at Meld. When he was about to start complaining, Shizuku preemptively bowed her head and said.

“I’m Sorry. Thank you.”

“Don’t…Don’t thank me. I can’t let another person die. We will wholeheartedly leave this Dungeon. I’ll leave her to you.”

“You don’t even need to ask.”

She watched him leave, she headed for Kouki and got him to hand

Kaori to her. Kouki still had a disappointed expression on his face from being interrupted.

“Since we couldn’t stop her, Meld had to. You understand, right? We don’t have any time. Before her cries can start to affect everyone’s spirit, we had to stop her before she broke down. Hey, you have to lead the way. So we can all get out of this. This is what Nagumo-kun would have said.”

At her words, Kouki nodded.

“You are right, let’s hurry.”

They saw one of their classmate die in front of their eyes. This event had caused a lot of damage to be engraved into the students’ spirit. Everyone was looked at where the bridge used to be in a stupefied expression . There was a girl that said “No more!” and sat down. Just like Hajime had exclaimed, the group needed a leader right now.

Kouki raised his voice towards his classmates

“Everyone! Right now, just think about surviving. We have to withdraw!”

The students moved sluggishly in response to his words. The magical circles that spawned the Traum Soldier was still active. Their numbers increased one by one. At their current mental status

fighting would be reckless, also it was not necessary to fight. Kouki shouted at his classmates to urge them to escape. Meld and his knights also tried to encourage the students.

Eventually, everyone escaped by the stairs.

The stairs to the upper level was long. It climbed so high that they could see nothing else but the stairs in the darkness. They felt like they had ascended 30 or more levels at that point. Even if their bodies were enhanced by magic, they would start feeling the fatigue soon. Wounds from their earlier battle was still present. It didn't help that the stairs were long and dimly light, making the students even more gloomy. At this moment, Meld considered having a small rest, but refrained when he saw a huge wall that had a magical formation drawn on it.

Students' faces started to regain their vitality. Meld quickly approached the wall and started to investigate it. They did not forget to use the Fair Scope. From their investigation, the chance of it being a trap is very unlikely. The carved magical formula's purpose was to move the wall in front of them. Meld started to chant to pour magic into the magical formula. Just like a hidden door used by Ninjas, the door rotated to open the way and showed the room behind it.

The revealed room was a room they had visited in the 20th floor.

"We returned?"

"We made it back!"

“We did it…we got back…”

One after another a sigh of relief escaped from the classmates. There were a few students that burst into tears and others who just fell on their ass. Even Kouki and his party that were leaning on the wall, wanted to sit down. They were still in a Dungeon though. Even if it was a low number level, they did not when a monster could appear. They had to escape the Dungeon before they could actually relax.

Meld had to suppress his longing to rest. He had to harden his heart as he shouted for the students to get up.

“You guys! Don’t sit! If you get exhausted here, you won’t be able to return! To avoid combat with any monsters we have to escape as quickly as possible. Hey, just endure it for a little more!”

For the students who wanted to rest more, they just stared in silent protest at him. The student reluctantly stood up while a bit dizzy. Kouki hide his fatigue and took point. On their way out, the knights concentrated on fighting as little amount of enemies as possible. They raced towards the entrance in one stretch.

Finally, they reached the 1st floor and saw the nostalgic entrance. They had not even stayed in the dungeon for a single day, many people felt it was such a long time since they had seen it.

This time the students really looked relieved after they exited the

Dungeon. There were even students sprawled out in front of the gate square. All of them were pleased to have survived. Some of the students did not feel this way. Shizuku, who was still carrying the unconscious Karoi, Kouki, Ryutaro, Eri, Suzu, and the girl Hajime saved had a dark look.

Meld went to make a report at the reception area while minding the students with a side glance. There was a new dangerous trap on the 20th level. Since the bridge had collapsed, there was no way of knowing the purpose of the trap, but he still needed to report it. He couldn't help but report Hajime's death. Meld was having a hard time not showing his depression on his face. A sigh couldn't help but escape from him.

* * *

When the group returned to Horald, they returned to their rooms without much spirit. There were a few students that discussed with each other, but most of the students had already fallen asleep on their bed.

And then there was Hiyama Daisuke. Outside of the inn and located at a corner in the town he sat there. He choose an inconspicuous place to sit with his hands hugging his knees. Buried between his knees was his face that was very still. If his fellow class saw him, it would look like he was depressed that one of his classmates had passed. However…

"Hi, Hihihi. I-It was his fault! For a small fry…h-he got carried away…i-it was divine punishment. I'm not wrong…it was for Shirasaki's sake…that small fry…is not longer a concern…I'm not wrong…hihihi"

With his dark smile and dull eyes, he tried to justify himself.

The fireball that veered off course and hit Hajime was casted by Hiyama. The escape to the stairs and rescuing of Hajime, the sight of Hajime and Kaori's night rendezvous, Hiyama heard a devil whisper to him. If I killed him now, no one will notice? At that moment he sold his soul to the devil.

To not be discovered, Hiyama timed his shot very carefully and lead his fireball to Hajime. In that chaotic barrage it would be very difficult to work out who casted what. He chose the fireball because his aptitude was wind. There would be no evidence or any suspicion. Hiyama told all of this to himself as gave off a dark laugh.

Someone at that moment called out to him.

"Heh, it really was you. The first murder from another world is a fellow classmate…you did quite well!"

"W-Who?"

Hiyama backed away in a panic. The one who hailed him was a classmate he knew.

"Y-You, what are you doing here?"

“Don’t worry about such a thing. Rather than that…Murder-san? How do you feel right now? How does it feel to kill off a love rival in midst of the confusion? ”

That person laughed a little. Like he had just seen a comedy. Hiyama said to himself, one classmate did die, yet this person did not care. All the other classmates were shocked and looked miserable, but this person had no such expression on his face, not even a speck.

“Is this your true nature?”

The stunned Hiyama muttered out. A condescending scoff could be heard from the person.

“Nature? It’s not anything complicated like that. Isn’t it common to have a few secrets? More important that that…what would happen if I spread this to everyone? Especially…if she heard it.”

“S-Such a thing…No one would believe…and the evidence?”

“None, but they would believe my words. At that moment, do you think your words would be good enough?”

Hiyama was cornered. The words was used to teased the already weakened mouse. No one would have imagined that this fellow

could be like this. Daisuke still couldn't believe that this person had a split personality. The person looked down at Daisuke with a sadistic expression that sent chills throughout his body.

"What do you want?"

"Regrettable. It would seem like I'm threatening you, isn't it? Fufu. It's not like I want something from you right now. For now, all you have to do is be my hands and feet. "

"Such a thing…"

It was something like a slave declaration. Naturally, Hiyama hesitated at that. He wanted to refuse, but if he did then this person would mercilessly spread the rumor about his deeds. The conflicted Hiyama thought, "Still working with this person is better than imprisonment." This character foresaw Hiyama's conflict and decided to tempt him.

"Don't you want Shirasaki Kaori?"

"W-What did you say?"

Hiyama's gloomy thoughts were blown away in an instant and just stared at the person. This individual smirked at Hiyama's stunned visage, and continued with the temptation.

“If you follow me…someday you will obtain her. I was going to approach Nagumo-kun with this offer, but you killed him. You may be more suited for what I have in store, so I guess it all worked out in the end. ”

“…What’s your objective? What do you want to accomplish?”

In this situation he was ignorant of, he unknowingly raised his voice.

“Fufu, it has nothing to do with you. I’m searching for something, that’s all I’ll say…So, your answer?”

Hiyama did not want to disturb him and just filed away the person attitude of treating him like an idiot into his memory. Daisuke was very afraid of this transformation of character, he did not have much choice so he just nodded his head.

“…I’ll obey.”

“Ahahaha, that’s good. Having to prosecute my own classmate would be painful. Well, let’s get along, Murder-san! Ahahaha”

Hiyama just watched the person return in the direction of the inn while they laughed happily, a small “damn” escaped from his lips.

Even if he wants to forget, just being in denial will not erase it, this

scene would stick to him. The expression Kaori had when Hajime fell into the abyss. What kind of words would articulate her feelings?

Right now, while all those dead tired students slept likes logs. Hajime's death at the abyss helped discern Kaori's feelings. Kaori never took care of Hajime just for good will. When looking at the exhausted Kaori, this would apply awareness to the cause. Hiyama jeopardized himself by performing such a careless act.

He must conduct himself well. In order to secure one's place. Hiyama had already crossed the line. It wasn't possible to stop now. According to that individual, There was a possibility of him disappearing and a possibility that he would get Kaori.

"Fufu, It will be alright. Everything will go well. I'm not wrong…"

Hiyama returned to his previous position and started to mumble again. This time not a single person bothered him.

Arifureta: Volume 1 Chapter 8

Abyss

[TL : Gore Warning - Strong Explicite Details]

* * *

Zaa-the sound of running water. A cool breeze brushed against his cheeks and caused him to tremble. There was a solid sensation in contact with his face and a chill pierced his lower half of his body. Hajime raised a groan as he work up.

Absentmindedly, he put forth effort to sit upright while his whole body scowl as it throbbed with pain.

“Ow, This is…For sure I…”

Holding his unsteady head with one hand, he studied the vicinity whilst he recalled his memories. Even though the surrounding was dim, thanks to the emission from the green light stones, it was not like he was blinded by the darkness. In front of Hajime was a river about 5 m in width, and it was in this that his lower body was submerged in. Hajime’s upper body seems to have been caught and stranded by protruding rocks located at the side of the river.

“Yeah…I fell down the broken bridge…thereupon…”

His head that had a fog clouding his mind finally started to turns its gears again. Hajime must have survived the drop by sheer luck. In the middle of his fall he encountered area where the cliff had a puncture, from this leak water sprouted out like a flood. There were numberless waterfalls here, and these waterfalls blew away Hajime time after time until gradually he was thrust to the wall. At the very end he was pushed out of a tunnel that was like a waterslide. It was an unbelievable miracle. When he was flying out of the tunnel Hajime hit his head and lost consciousness. Personally, Hajime did not know how such a miracle took place.

“Anyway, I was saved…Achoo! I-It’s cold.”

He was submerged in the cold underground water this whole time, because of this his whole body was completely cold. At this rate there was a possibility that he could catch hypothermia, Hajime quickly picked himself up. Trembling and shivering he took off his clothes and wringed them.

Using his transmutation he created a single sheet of paper. On the hard stone floor he started to engrave a transmutation circle.

“It’s too cold to concentrate…”

He wanted a “Spark” magic. This was a simple magic that even children could perform with a 10 cm magic formation. At this moment, there was no magic stones to increase the efficiency of the magic because Hajime needed it with his zero aptitude for magic.

Hajime would have to make a complicated formula that would be 1 m in diameter to cast that “Spark”. After 10 minutes he was able to finished the magic formation and started his chanting to activate it.

“I seek fire,The power of light, Manifest, “Spark”…Why is there such an exaggerated chant just to create an ordinary flame? So embarrassing…Ha-a.”

The sighing seems to have become a habit recently. Still he invoked the fist-sized flame and bathed in its warmth. He set his clothes side by side near the flames to dry it.

“I wonder where this is…I think I fell a considerable height…can I return?”

Warming himself with the flame, he could feel himself calm. Gradually anxiety started to fill his heart. Hajime really wanted to cry, tears even started to accumulate in his eyes , but he bore with it because if he cried now he would fall apart. He wiped away the tears that had collected and slapped his own cheeks.

“Got no other choice, I have to find a way back. It’s fine, I’m sure it will be fine.”

Hajime’s face developed into a determined one after he muttered encouragements to himself, all while staring at the flames.

After about 20 minutes the clothes were dry and warm, so Hajime

set off. Hajime was not sure which level he was in but for sure he was still in the Dungeon. It wouldn't be strange to have monsters lurking. He carefully proceeded to walk down into a huge passage that lead into the depths.

The passage that Hajime continued on felt like a cave. Rather than a low-rise square passage, the passage had rocks and walls protruding in many places and it winds around complicatedly. It was similar to the last room on the 20th floor, the only difference was the size. The complicated passage full of obstacles was 20 m in diameter. Even the more narrow places was still 10 m in diameter. Although it was not an easy path to treat, there were a lot of places to hide and Hajime advanced stealthily from hiding area to hiding area.

He wondered how much he walked. Hajime started to feel tired, until he finally reached a fork for the first time. A huge crossroad was presented to him. Behind the boulder was Hajime hiding, he wondered which path he should take.

A moment was taken to think over it. He thought he saw something at the edge of his vision and he quickly hid behind a rock. Quietly he stuck his head out and waited to see. From the passage straight ahead, a white fur ball hopped into view. It had long ears, and it looked like a rabbit. However, it was about the size of a mid-sized dog and its hind legs were heavily muscled. The "rabbit" also had several dark red lines running along its body like blood vessels, the lines also pulsated like a heart. That was very creepy.

Clearly, it was a dangerous demon. Hajime decided to avoid by going left or right instead of going straight. It looked like he wouldn't be able to proceed to the right because the "rabbit" was near it. Hajime held his breath and waited for the time to move. At

that moment, the rabbit turned around and started to sniff the ground. Right now! He tried to move at that.

The rabbit seemed to react to that and it quickly straighten its back to stand up. It's vigilant ears rustled.

(Crap! D-Did it find me? I-I'm fine?)

He clung his body to the boulder to hide himself, and he tried to gain control of his thumping heart. Those keen ear felt like they could pick up his throbbing heart, he broke out into a cold sweat at that thought.

Luckily, it was a different reason the rabbit was alert.

"Guru~ua!"

A wolf-like demon with white hair jumped out and growled at the rabbit. The white wolf had two tails and was about the size of a large dog. Just like the rabbit, the wolf had the same palpitating dark red lines all over its body. After that wolf jump out, two more wolves jumped out from behind different stones to join it.

Hajime peeked his head out and observed the situation. No matter how you look at it, the wolves were going to prey on the rabbit-chan (though it wasn't cute enough to attach chan). With the cover of confusion Hajime half rose his feet. However…

“Kyu!”

A cute cry leaked from it and jumped into the air with a rotation. The rabbit gave a roundhouse kick with its massive legs and smacked the first wolf.

Dopan

The kick generated a sound that wasn’t thought possible. Rabbit-chan’s got a clean kick to the wolf’s head.

Gogya

There was a resounding echo and Hajime could see that the wolf’s neck had been bent into the wrong direction.

Hajime went rigid at that display. Using the centrifugal force from the roundhouse kick, the rabbit rotated in the air until it was in an upside-down state. The rabbit stomped the air and fell towards the ground like a meteor. Just before landing, it rotated itself perpendicular to it and gave a powerful heel drop to the wolf close to the landing point.

Begya

Without even getting the chance to give off a death throe, both the wolves heads were pulverized. Another two wolves appeared to jump at the rabbit when it landed. Hajime thought it was this moment that the rabbit would lose. The rabbit was able to do a handstand while rotating his legs, just like a break dancer. Both of the wolves were flung towards and slammed against it because of the tornado like rotating kicks. Blood splashed against the walls and their corpse trailed down.

The last wolf ruffled its tail as it growled. Soon the tails started to discharge electricity. It was trying to cast a Special Magic.

“Guru-ua!”

Lightning fly at the rabbit with a howl. As the high-speed lightning approached, the rabbit avoided it splendidly by performing zigzagging steps. When the lightning dissipated the rabbit drove a somersault kick into the wolf’s jaw in one go. The kick blew the wolf away and it landed on the ground backwards and bent. It seemed like its neck broke from the force.

“Kyu!”

A victory cry? The rabbit raised its forelimbs and brushed off its ears.

“Mommy, tell me it’s a lie.”

Hajime who was still stiff can only give a dry smile. Isn't this dangerous? The Traum Soldier that the students had trouble with looked like toys compared to this bunny. This rabbit may be stronger than the Behemoth, who could only do simple monotonous attacks.

He knew that if he was caught it would be certain death, this fretting caused him to unconsciously step back. That was an error.

Karan [Tap]

That noise echoed throughout the whole cave. Hajime had kicked a pebble near his feet that fell and created that racket. Such a cliché grave mistake. A large amount of cold sweat streamed down his face. The rabbit turns its head like a machine that wasn't oiled to the sound.

Hajime was definitely seen.

It's ruby red eyes narrow as it caught sight of Hajime. He froze like a frog hypnotized by a snake. Alarms bells started to go off in his head and his soul told him to run for his life, but his body did not listen to him.

Finally, the rabbit that had only been looking back at Hajime with his head, orientated its whole body towards him. It started to pour energy into its legs.

“It’s coming!”

He instinctively knew that. Rabbit demon exploded towards him, it dashed at him at an absurd speed that left afterimages behind it.

When he noticed it, he jumped aside with all his might.

The place where he was just at exploded like a cannonball had just struck it. It gouged out the ground as it detonated. Hajime rolled while the earth rumbled, and stopped with his backside on the floor. He retreated from the epicenter with a pale face.

Slowly the rabbit stood up with a slack attitude, after it continued its assault. Hajime quickly constructed a stone wall with his transmutation. Stone wall met the rabbit’s kick and easily the kick pierced through it. By pure reflex he brought up his left arm to block. Good thing his face was not crushed, but the impact launched him to the ground. Pain coursed through his left arm when he gathered himself.

“Augh”

When he looked at his left forearm, it was broken and bent in a funny angle. Looks like it was totally crushed. Crouching in pain, he desperately sought out the rabbit. What he found was the rabbit walking in a relaxed manner, a total inverse of its earlier attitude. It must have been his imagination, but its eyes were staring at him in a condescending. Looks like it was having fun messing with him.

Since he was on his backside, he couldn't even retreat that well. There standing in front of Hajime was the rabbit. It looked down on him, like he was some worm crawling on the earth. The rabbit brandished its foot to show it off.

(…I wonder if this is the end…)

Despair assailed Hajime. He adopted a dazed looked and gave up as he stared at the rabbit's feet. Eventually the kick of instant death was swung.

Hajime shut his eyes, horrified at the impending doom.

…

No matter how much time passed, the expected blow never came. He fearfully opened his eyes and in front of his face was the rabbit's foot. The kick was stopped just before it made impact. It can't be, was it still playing with him and trying to instill even more anguish in him? Hajime noticed something though, when he looked closely the rabbit was trembling.

(W-What? Why is it trembling…it seems scared…)

No, not "seem", it really was afraid. Hajime tried to run for the right passage, but he caught sight of a new demon.

Huge, was a word that could describe it. The beast was 2 m tall and its whole frame covered in white fur. Like all the other monsters he met here, this beast also had pulsating dark red lines wrapping its body. If he could compare it to another animal then a bear came to mind. One differences were that its arm extended all the way down to its feet, and these arms had 3 claws protruding out almost 30 cm.

Before he knew it that bear was nearby, while it glared at its prey. Silence surrounded the area. Both Hajime and the rabbit was frozen and could not move. No, would not move. Just like how Hajime was earlier. The bear's stare had stopped them.

"…Gururu."

Tired of the situation, the bear started to growl.

"Tsu!"

This caused the rabbit to return to reality. It quickly turned tail and instantly retreated at top speed. All that speed it used to crush its enemies was now being used to escape. Too bad it was all for naught.

Using speed that didn't suit its size, the bear aimed it's sharp claws at the rabbit. The rabbit used its agility to twist his body to dodge the blow. Hajime was certain the bear's claws had missed their target, and he saw the rabbit finish dodging.

When it landed, blood started to gush from its body as multiple cut wounds emerged on its body. More and more blood poured out of its wound until Hajime noticed that its body wasn't whole anymore. Piece by piece sections of the rabbit slipped off in different direction and a fountain of blood sprayed when the largest section was set free.

The gore show disgusted Hajime. A rabbit demon that powerful was taken down so easily without it being able to do anything. Now he knew why it was so scared. That bear demon was extraordinary. This guy would destroy any person Hajime knew of.

Lumbering its huge body, the bear approached the fresh corpse. Sounds of gorging could be heard from the bear.

Hajime could not move. Still consumed by fear, the beast eyes pin down Hajime with its eyes.

Nothing was left of the rabbit after the bear took 3 mouthful of it. It turned around and growled at Hajime. The beast's eyes said it all, "You are next."

Presented with the eyes of a predator all he could do was despair.

"Uwaaa-" [Ah!]

Hajime ran the opposite direction of the bear while screaming madly and forgetting about his broken arm.

If something like that rabbit couldn't escape then it did not look good for Hajime. The wind howl and from his left he felt pain explode in his body as he was flung against the wall.

"Gah!"

The blow had knocked all the air out of his lungs. He trailed down the wall as he collapsed into a fit of coughs. Hajime was swaying from the impact but he kept his eyes on the bear. Then he noticed the bear was chewing on something.

What the hell was it chewing on? The rabbit was already consumed. Somehow the arm it was eating was very familiar. Hajime was confused at the event, because he felt lighter on his left side. To be precise, his left arm…

"A-Are?" [What]

Hajime's face stiffened. Why is there no arm? Why was blood spurting out? He tilt his head. Hajime could not make sense of what happened. The reality of the situation finally hit him. Pain was the reminder that this was no dream.

"Ahhhhhhh!!!!"

His shriek echoed in the passage. Everything below his left elbow

had disappeared.

The beast still had its Special Magic. His three claws were able to create blades of wind that could extend up to 30 cm. If you thought about it losing just one arm was fortunate. The bear was playing with Hajime and it begged the question if Hajime was lucky. Considering that the rabbit earlier had been dealt with so quickly.

After he was finished with his meal, the bear advanced towards Hajime. His eyes was not condescending like the rabbit's. The beast just looked at Hajime as food.

The beast extended its forelimbs toward Hajime. It looked like it was going to eat Hajime alive.

"A, A, Guu, Re "Rensei"!" [Transmute]

While tears and mucus flowed, drool escaped from his mouth, he transmuted the wall with his only arm. It was an unconscious action. The only power that was available to the Hajime that had such low specs. Using magic that is usually only used to process weapons. This class was without a doubt a crafting class. Thought of as useless in combat, but another worlder showed the knights a new application for its skill. A skill that saved the lives of his classmate. On the brink of death, he choose to rely on that skill, and it answered him with a means of escape.

A hole 50 cm in height, 120 c in width, and 2m in depth formed in the wall. Hajime rolled into the hole and narrowly escaped the bears paws reaching towards him.

It was overwhelmed with anger from losing a prey.

“Guruaa!!”

The beast casted its Special Magic while it roared. It aimed its magic towards the hole Hajime made. A terrible destruction followed as the wall was shaved off my the powerful claws.

“Ahhhh–! “Rensei”! “Rensei”! “Rensei”!”

Pancing from the monster that was gradually getting closer, Hajime started to continuously cast his transmuting and delved deeper into the wall. He did not even bother to look back. Recklessly he repeated the magic, and advanced with a crawl. All his pains or any other thoughts were put in the backseat. Mana was consumed over and over again as his survival instinct had control over him.

How much did he progress? Hajime did not know, but he couldn’t hear the terrible sounds. In reality, he did not progress that much. Each cast of his “Rensei” allowed him to advance 2 m (This was twice as strong as his earlier days). The main problem was his bleeding, he would not be able to move soon.

His awareness was already gone from the excessive bleeding. Still his body pushed forward.

“”Rensei”… “Rensei”… “Rensei”… “Rensei”…”

No matter how many times he chanted, the wall did not change. His magic ran out before his body gave out. Exhausted, his hands fell from the wall.

Hajime fell on his back and his last strand of consciousness was going out. He just aimlessly started to the heavens, but all he saw was darkness.

Hajime at this time recalled some past memories. It was like a Revolving Lantern(*). His life flashed before his eyes. His nursery and elementary school, middle school, and high school days. Various memories flooded his mind until his last memory. In that bedroom illuminated by the moonlight. The chat he had with a goddess and the promise they made. Her smiling face.

[* Revolving Lantern is a show where a lantern has some cutouts done in them and in the center a candle or light source is placed. The shadow casted by the light and cutouts could provide a show. Usually the light is directed to one direction so a story could be told.]

After remembering that beautiful sight, the darkness engulfed him. Just before sleep claimed him, he felt a drop of water on his cheek. Like someone had shed a tear for him.

Arifureta: Volume 1 Chapter 9

Complete Change

Drip…Drip…

Hajime felt his consciousness return gradually as the drips of water hit his cheeks and entered his mouth. Wondering what was the cause, he slowly opened his eyes.

(…I'm alive?…I'm saved?…)

Attempting to get up, he was stopped when his forehead hit the low ceiling of the hole.

"Aku!?"

He totally forgot about the hole he constructed that was only 50 cm high. Hajime extended his hand to the ceiling to transmute a higher ceiling. Only one arm came into view. He remembered he lost his left arm, and felt phantom limb pains. At that he kept his left arm down, or what remained of it. There was swelling around the wound but it had closed.

"H-How?…There is so much blood…"

He couldn't see in the darkness, but if he had some light he would be able to see the pool of blood. The amount of blood he lost would have normally killed someone. To survey the surrounding he felt around with his hand and felt something slimy. His blood was still there and it had yet to dry. After All, it seemed he had bled, and it seemed not much time had passed since he fainted.

While he was wondering about his wound, another drop of water hit his cheeks. The moment it entered his mouth, he felt his body reenergize.

"…No way…was it this?"

Using his hand he performed a transmutation on the area where the droplet came from, while he ignored his phantom limb pains. Progressing further and further in as he transmuted a little lightheaded. Mysteriously when he drank the liquid his mana returned and no matter how much transmuting he performed his mana did not run out. Hajime repeatedly transfigured to find the water source.

Eventually the amount of mysterious liquid increased and more trickling could be heard. Hajime finally reached the source.

"This…is…"

An ore the size of a basketball emitting a light existed there. This ore was buried and assimilated with the surrounding rocks, and it

dripped the liquid. A beautiful and mysterious stone. The ore was emitting darker blue than aquamarine, at least that was the best representation he could think of. His phantom limb pain was left forgotten.

Fascinated with the stone, Hajime reached out to touch it with his mouth. The dull pain and haze that his body and mind felt was cleared, and the fatigue disappeared. Seems like the liquid from this stone had saved him. The liquid seemed to hold restorative powers. Phantom limb pains still occurred, but the other injuries or negative effects were healed.

Hajime didn't know, but this stone was the highest grade treasure called "God's Crystal". The crystal is a legendary relic thought to have been just a story. Formation of such a crystal is a miracle, because it was the crystallization of magical pools that collect by chance and needed 1000 years to form. Looking over it, the crystal was about 30-40 cm in diameter. After it has crystallized, it takes several hundred more years to saturate it to cause overflowing. That overflowing liquid is called "Sacred Water", and when drank it could cure any injury or disease. Though it doesn't have the power to regenerate parts, and it is considered a fountain of youth if continuously taken. A story of Eht healing people with this sacred water in ancient time is often recited.

He noticed that he returned from the brink of death. Hajime who was leaning on the wall sagged down. Bring up both knees, he placed his head between them while shivering from his close brush with death. He had no energy to even try to escape, his heart was broken.

Hajime might confront hostility and malice. Any rescue would be appreciated, and he might be able to stand up again. However, that

bear's eyes scared him. He did not want to encounter the eyes of a predator that wanted to devour him. Eyes that he had no experience with because he was used to being the top law of the jungle. Those eyes were responsible for why his arm was eaten and this broke his heart.

"Some…help me…"

In this abyss, his voice did not reach anyone…

* * *

What did he do?

Hajime was laying on his side curled up into a fetus position.

Four days have passed since his collapse. All this time he had not moved much and the sacred water had sustained him. The sacred water could keep a person alive except for extreme circumstances, and it did not ease any hunger pangs. He wasn't going to die, but he was suffering from phantom limb pains and starving sensation.

(How did I end up like this?)

A question he asked himself over and over again. His mind had recovered from drinking the sacred water, even if he suffered from pain and hunger. Unfortunately, because he had a clear mind, all

the suffering was clearly felt.

One day Hajime stopped drinking the sacred water.

(If this anguish continues for so long…I rather…)

After he muttered that, he fell unconscious.

Three days passed. The hunger that calmed had returned. His phantom limb pains did not subside.

(Still…I'm not dead…I don't want to die…)

Although he wished for death, a part of him still wanted to live. Conflicting thoughts alternated within his mind. He could no longer form any normal thoughts. His murmurs became incoherent and delirious.

Three more days elapsed. The sacred water was losing its efficiency, at this rate two more days and he would most likely be dead. He had not taken in fluids, let alone food.

Abnormalities started to appear in Hajime's mind recently.

(Why do I have to suffer…What did I do…)

(Why did this happen…What's the cause…)

(God unreasonably abducted me…)

(A classmate betrayed me…)

(The rabbit looked down on me…)

(That guy ate me…)

Gradually his thoughts became darker. Who was wrong? Who forced their unreasonableness onto him? Who harmed him? Pain gradually turned into rage, rage led to hatred, he seeked an enemy. Everything had worked into corrupt his spirit. The severe pain and starvation that wrecked his body, and the events that led him here into this endless darkness.

(Nobody has come to rescue me…)

(If nobody is going to help me, what should I do?)

(How do I rid myself of this pain?)

Day 9. Hajime thoughts had made a breakthrough about his current situation. With a heart that wanted release from its torment, he needed to first expel the unnecessary hatred and anger. Because the suffering did not end when his heart turned black…

(What…am I wishing for?)

(I wish for “life”.)

(What type of people impedes me?)

(My enemies)

(Then what should I do?)

(I-I…)

Day ten. His heart was now free of hatred and anger. The outrageous God, back-stabbing classmate, hostile demons, the smiling person desiring to protect him, all of them mattered naught. To live, to earn the privilege to survive, everything else was trivialities. Hajime had arrived at an answer for his question.

That is…

(KILL)

Not for malice, animosity, or hate. In order to live, he will kill with pure intent.

All those who threaten his survival are enemies, and to my enemies…

(KILL, KILL, KILL,

tough heart was re-forged by the fires of agony, despair and darkness.

Hajime starts to move his completely weakened body. For the past few days he had slurped on the accumulated sacred water like a dog given a drinking bowl. The hunger or phantom limb pain did not disappear, but it revitalized his body.

His eyes shined glaringly, his watery mouth needed to be wiped and his face broke out into a fearless grin. The canines in his warped mouth gained a glint. Certainly his expression had a sudden change just like his thoughts. Hajime arose to proclaim a transmutation and he muttered again…

“KILL”

* * *

In the labyrinth there was a pack of two-tailed wolves. A pack of wolves usually consisted of 4-6 members. Because they were the weakest demon on this level, they compensated by cooperating in a group. The group Hajime saw was no exception, they totaled four in number.

Cautiously, he observed his surroundings from his hiding spot near the wall and waited for the best hunting ground. The most fundamental hunting method was setting up an ambush. He let the wolves wander for a while until the perfect ambush site was discovered, this site had rocks covering the four corners. Now he waited for the prey to come. The moment one of them showed up,

it was going to get butchered by being sandwiched by a rock and the wall. Hajime was practically salivating at the thought of his prey, until he felt something was off.

Since their most important survival tool is their cooperation, they had an almost telepathic link with each other. Packmates would not be able to directly communicate with each other, but they would somehow know where each were and what they were doing. However, something was something wrong. They were gathered into a group of four but somehow the leader could only sense three left among them. One of the wolves' signature that was at the opposite side of the wall disappeared.

It harbored doubts, when he put in the effort to raise from his prone position, it heard one of its packmate scream. Restlessness was conveyed from one wolf that was near the companion that disappeared. The comrade was caught and stuck between something and could not slip out. Two wolves on the opposite side rushed up to rescue him. However, the sign of that struggling animal disappeared.

Confused, it quickly went to the wall and checked the area, but nothing was there. The remaining two puzzled wolves used their noses to sniff around the area the two other wolves disappeared from to get a hint.

At that moment, the ground depressed, and the walls protruded out to cover them. When they were about to jump aside, the depressed floor suddenly reverted back to its original state. This would make escaping the trap an easy task for the wolves. If it had not been confused with encountering such a new experience, they would not have been caught so easily. The assailant had already planned for their confusion and that single moment of hesitation. That was a

good enough opportunity to catch them.

“Guru-ua!?”

The two wolves screamed as the walls swallowed them…then nothing was left.

Hajime was the one to catch all four of those wolves. Fighting back with determination, he was able to oppress his hunger and phantom limb pains. The sacred water had sustained him so far, it was a good thing he trained earnestly repeatedly his transmuting and mana capacity.

His transmuting was more quick, more accurate and more extensive now. If he went out right now, he might die. He had accumulated training when he was in the room with the God’s Crystal. Hajime wanted to polish his weapon even if slightly, and of course his weapon is transmutation.

Even if it was possible for him to endure the pains, they still assaulted him. These pains were probably what made Hajime concentrate to such an extreme manner.This allowed him to perform several times faster than normal, and his transmuting range was three meters now. Of course he did not have an earth attribute magic that could be used offensively.

He had a small container filled with sacred water and started to look for his enemies. Using his transmuting he was able to find the four wolves. Hajime decided to tail them. Many times he was almost found out, but he was able to lose their trail by hiding in

spots he constructed with his transmuting. That was when he sprang his trap and using his transmuting he dragged them into the wall.

“Now what? My transmutation has no direct killing power. Both the speed and power of my transmuting did not seem to be enough to kill the demons.”

Hajime looked through a tiny peep hole with his glistening eyes. The motionless pack growled while they were in the wall.

Looked like he was right, the wolves had not died. Previously, he had attacked them with the splintering stone but it seemed that there was not enough power and speed to harm them. This was probably because of the earth here. His magic was only used to process minerals, so using such a power to kill seemed to be out of reach. Thus, restraining them was the best he could do.

“I wonder if I should suffocate them…but I can’t wait for that.”

Hajime’s eyes started to grin as it gained a predatorial glint. He press his right arm against the wall and casted his magic. A piece of stone was cut off and slowly he transfigured it while he concentrated on an image. When it was done the stone had been turned into a thin spiral spear. Furthermore, it had other parts added on to it, like a handle.

“Now then, to dig!”

The spear was stabbed towards the ground where the wolves resided. Hard fur and skin made contact with the tip of the spear.

“After all I can’t stab you. That confirms my hypothesis.”

Why didn’t he use a sword or knife? Because it is widely known that the stronger the demon the harder it becomes. There were a few exceptions to it. Hajime had studied a lot to overcome his uselessness and from what he had gathered a normal sword or knife would be useless against these guys.

Thus, Hajime started to rotate the handle on the spear. The spear spiraled to match Hajime’s actions. He was using this spear as a drill to pierce through the demon’s hard skin.

Applying his weight to turn it, and eventually it started to slowly dig into the beast’s skin.

“Guru-aa!!”

The wolf screamed.

“Does it hurt? I won’t apologize. I’m doing this to live. Don’t you guys eat me too? We both feel the same.”

While talking, he had constantly been rotating the drill. The wolf tried to struggle desperately, but it was impossible because it had

not a single gap to work against.

Finally, the drill had broken through its tough skin layer. The drill mercilessly destroyed the wolf's innards. A death cry escaped from its mouth. It screamed for a bit but soon it twitched for a bit and finally stopped moving.

"Alright, let's secure the food first."

Laughing gleefully, he butchered the other three in the same manner. When he was done, the carcasses was recovered using transmutation. The fur on them was removed with some trouble, he only had one hand.

His hunger stimulated his desire to consume.

Arifureta: Volume 1 Chapter 10

Weapon Creation

In the darkness, the light stones illuminate the surrounding area.

The light projected a few shadows. One of the shadows, provided a silhouette of someone crouching in front of a beast while chewing could be heard.

“Augh, Guu, This seriously sucks.”

Hajime ate the wolf meat with a curse. The meat was very tough, and blood dripped off as he took a bite and swallowed. This had been his first meal for the past weeks. The stomach was surprised to suddenly receive the meat. Pains shot through his body at the stomach’s protest. Hajime knew he would get such a response and ignore it to keep eating.

His appearance looked so feral. If any of the civilized humans saw what was going it they would be repulsed. The disgusting smell and taste would cause them to lose their appetite. Hajime did not even consider such a thought because he was happy to have a meal. He continued to eat in a daze.

After eating so much of this meat that his belly swelled and drinking the sacred water that the Church of Saints would be

envious of. An unusual phenomenon struck his body.

“Ah?…Augh!?”

An intense pain suddenly wracked his body. Erosion, that was the best word to describe what horrible sensation he felt going through his body. The pain intensified as time passed.

“Guaa! W-What…Guu!”

Excruciating pain corroded his body. Hajime thrashed on the ground. This pain was so strong that it blew away his phantom limb pain.

With his trembling hands, Hajime reached into his breast pocket and took out a test-tube made of stone. He quickly chewed the edge of the tube and drank the contents inside. The sacred water quickly went to work and the pain subsided, but a short time later the agony continued.

“Higugaa! What the…it didn’t help? Augh!”

His body started to pulsate with the pain. Thump, Thump, his body pulsed. Even the sounds could be heard coming from his body.

However the next moment, the sacred water’s healing properties started to restore his body. When it was done healing him, the pain

returned. Then it was repaired again.

Even the sacred water could not stunt the effects. The tremendous healing ability was actually backfiring here.

Hajime screamed as he floundered on the ground. He banged his head repeatedly against the wall at the unending sight of his hell. Even if he wanted to die, there would be noone to grant his desire, so he had no choice but to endure it.

Changes started to form on Hajime's body. First, his hair lost all color. Maybe because of a pain that broke his threshold, or another cause, his black Japanese hair turned white. Next, his muscles and skeleton started to thicken. Crimson lines started to emerge all over his body.

There is a phenomenon called overcompensation. This is the process the body goes through when training muscles. The muscles are broken down from the severe use and in order to compensate and adapt to the strain it creates stronger and more muscle when the body recovers. The same happens to the skeletal system. Hajime's body was going through this phenomenon.

Demon meat was a deadly poison for humans. All of them had Magic Stones in their body, and this allowed for their wonderful physical ability with their magical power. Inside his body this magic was strongly permeating his muscles and bones.

This magic was the Special Magic that did not require the magic circles or incantation to cast, and his magic was getting altered.

This kind of alteration would be fatal to a human. From the inside of the body the poison would erode the body and destroy the cells. In the past, anyone who had consumed demon flesh was broken to pieces and died. Hajime knew of this, but his starvation had caused him to be unable to recall this knowledge.

If Hajime had just ate the demon flesh than he would have collapsed and died. However, there was an elixir that prevented that. Sacred water, it will restore immediately what once was broken. Because of this constant breaking and restoring, overcompensation, his body strengthened at an unbelievable speed.

Destroy, Repair, Destroy, then Repair. The body changed while pulsing. It looked like he was being reborn. A ceremony of birth to throw away the body's weakness,a metamorphosis. Hajime's screams was like the first cry of a newborn.

When the pulsation stopped, Hajime went limp. Pure white was his hair color now, and crimson lines formed on his body. He was just like the monsters that plagued this level.

Hajime's right hand twitched. The closed eyes were opened slightly. His unfocused eyes settled onto his right hand. Grasping his hand into a fist, he scratched along the ground. Hajime slowly clasped and unclasp his hand to prove he was still alive. When he finished checking if he had control of his body, he stood up slowly.

"…Oh, yeah. You weren't suppose to eat demon meat…I'm an idiot…but he couldn't help but eat it."

Completely exhausted, Hajime just snorted. Both his hunger and his phantom limb pain disappeared after this incident. On the contrary, his body felt strangely light and overflowed with power. Even though he just went through that, it was in its best condition. The most clearly developed muscles was his arm and abdomen. Hajime heights also increased by 10 cm, bringing the total height to 175 cm.

“What happened to my body? There is some strang feeling…”

Not only had his external body changed, but he felt something out of place inside. The strange feeling felt cold and hot at the same time. When more of his awareness came, he focused on the crimson lines on his arm.

“Wow, how unpleasant. Makes me feel like a demon…What a joke. Oh yeah, the Status Plate!”

Exploring through his pockets, he searched for the forgotten status plate. Good thing he did not lose it. There on the plate was displayed Hajime’s current condition. Maybe it would show if something was wrong with his body.

Name	Nagumo Hajime		
Age	17 Years Old		
Race	Human		
Level	1		
Class	Transmutation Artist (Synergist)		
HP	300/300		
MP	300/300		
Strength	30		
Resistance	30		
Agility	30		
Magic Power	30		
Magic Resistance	30		
Skills			

- Transmutation
- Magic Manipulation
- Iron Stomach
- Lightning Clad
- Language Comprehension

“…Say What!?”

Like always, whenever he is astonished he switches to Kansai dialect and performs a Tsukkomi. All his stats had increased significantly, and he had three new skills. He couldn’t believe it, and he was still just level 8. Levels were considered the amount of progression a person had, for Hajime, this meant he had a lot of potential to grow.

“Magic Manipulation?”

He wondered if he could directly control magic then. Hajime pondered if the earlier sensation he felt was magic. To verify his thoughts, he concentrated to attempt this “magic manipulation.” The crimson lines emerge again when Hajime concentrated on that sensation. He imagined an image where that sensation gathered into his right hand. Slowly the sensation returned and he could feel the movement of magic.

“Whoa!”

When he attempted to raise his voice at the sensation, the magic started to gather around the magic formation on his glove. The surprised Hajime tried to transmute, and the ground rose easily.

“Seriously? I don’t need to chant? But the principle of magic said that direct manipulation of magic was impossible. Only demons could perform it. Maybe after consuming demon flesh I obtained the ability?”

Right on the dot! Hajime had for sure gotten the ability of the of the demons. He wanted to test out “Lightning Clad” next.

“How do I use it? If you mention “Lightning Clad”, it has to deal with electricity. Was it what the wolves casted with their tail?”

He tried different ways to invoke it but nothing changed. Hajime did not know how the magic felt like, so he did not know what to do. Groaning, he remembered when he learned how to transmute, and recalled that imagination was important. Magic was not just about making a magical formation, another part was the image formed.

Hajime imagined an image of static electricity crackling. On the tips of his right hands emitted an electric burst.

“Oh! It came out. Now I see. For demons, the most important part was to imagine its magic.”

After he got a hang of it, he repeated created a discharge of electricity. Unlike the wolves, he could not launch his lightning. Maybe this is why it was called “Lightning Clad”, he was able to clad his body in lightning. Practice was necessary to control the

current and voltage.

Lastly, the “Iron Stomach” skill. Maybe next time he ate demon flesh, he wouldn’t be wrecked with pain. There was no food in the labyrinth. Does he take starvation or the pain? This skill can maybe solve this question for him, and he anticipated it.

Hajime took a piece of wolf meat and fired it with lightning. After his starvation was cured, he did not want to eat raw meat. He fired it until it was brown.

Making up his mind, he swallowed it. 10 seconds…1 minute…10 minutes passed and nothing. Hajime started to grill more meat and consumed them. There wasn’t any pain that assaulted him. He wondered if it was because of the skill or had he just developed a tolerance for it. Hajime did not know, but he rejoiced. With this he did not have to taste hell everytime.

Hajime ate until he was full, and decided to return to base. He finally had the possibility to beat that bear demon. Determined, he decided to work hard to develop his new skills.

Other wolves were carved for their meat. Compared to his first time with them, this time it was easy. He returned to the area with the God’s Crystal and created a storage to store the carved meat with this transmuting.

* * *

A few days have passed since Hajime returned to the base, and all this time he had been training his transmuting and new skills.

Everything was going well, and all his skills were progressing well. His transmutation skill went through a change. The skill had acquired a derived skill from itself. “Mineral Appraisal” was the name of the skill. In the Royal Capital of the Kingdom, only high-ranking smiths had this skill.

Usually the magical formations needed to power appraisal magic are much bigger than the formations used for offensive magic. The facilities that could perform these huge magical formations were limited. For those that had the skill, they could easily analyze any mineral with just a chant and magic formation as long as they touch it. This derived skill was acquired by training the transmutation skill for many years, it was not an innate skill.

Hajime decided to check the neighboring minerals with his newfound skill. When a person uses the skill the description will show up on their status plate. For example,

Green Light Stone
This stone has the ability to absorb magic. Green light is produced with this saved up magic. If it is split, all the accumulated magic will be released in an instant.

What a very simple description; it did the job though. Hajime grinned and laughed as a thought came up. From here he could search for minerals to make powerful weapons that could be his trump card.

Combustion Stone
An inflammable ore. The structural component is used to fuel the combustion; continuously burning will reduce size until nothing is left. Explosion may occur if many are lit in a sealed area. Its power is equivalent to a higher level fire spell; this depends on the amount and rate of compression used in forging.

When he read the description, he felt a thought develop in his brain. This stone may play a similar role to gunpowder. If this was the case, then he could create a weapon with extreme firepower with his transmuting. Hajime was excited. There was going to be a lot of trial and error. The amount of effort needed to design it would not be small. Even though his transmuting had saved him many times before, it still lacked a real means of attack; the idea that he would get a real weapon had him rejoicing.

Ten days have passed since he ate the wolf, and finally he had succeeded producing his project.

With an attack that could exceed the speed of sound for a short distance, it was a modern weapon with great firepower. Overall length was 35 cm, it had a revolving magazine that held 6 bullets made from Tauru Ore; the hardest known ore in this area. The barrel was elongated. Bullets were made using Tauru Ore as the projectile and compressed powdered Combustion Stone was the propellant. Oversized revolver would accurately describe the firearm. Combustion Stone was not the only explosive to propel the bullet. Using his “Lightning Clad” skill, he could produce electromagnetic force to help accelerate the bullet; like a small rail gun. This equated to a power that was 10 times stronger than an anti-matter rifle. He called it “Donner”. Hajime wanted to have a partner to rely on.

“I did it! With this I will be able to deal with that monster!”

Hajime had designed “Donner” using modern firearms as the model: he looked at his masterpiece and laughed slightly. This world’s craftsmen only knew how to make a good sword or armor. Right now, a new weapon has been created in this world that was ruled by swords and magic.

* * *

Tauru Ore
Hard black ore. Hardness 8 (On a scale of 10 being the hardest). Resistant to impact and heat. Vulnerable to cold. Becomes fragile if cooled. Binds if heated.

Arifureta: Volume 2 Chapter 1

Subjugation of an Arch-Nemesis

Campaign against the Bear.

Hajime is not how he was before!

* * *

“Chew, chew…Even the rabbit meat sucks.”

Hajime was the person currently eating the rabbit. That’s right, the rabbit demon. Once these kicking experts looked down on him but now they were just food to him. He had expected the meat to taste better since it was a rabbit, but it was still demon flesh. It was just bad like normal.

The rabbit’s whole body was consumed in one sitting. Once he acquired “Iron Stomach”, he proceeded to eat as much as he want and could. Hajime was especially hungry after he used his magic. In order to kill this rabbit, he had used quite a bit of power. He wouldn’t die since he had the sacred water, but he had to use his power carefully; the starvation sensation that could happen if he overused his power was not something he wanted.

The rabbit was defeated because he had trapped it. Drawing the rabbit to the river was the starting point. When it passed by the river, he sprinkled water onto the rabbit. He produced an overpowered lightning afterwards. Donner was fired upon it and just as expected the rabbit blew up in a cloud of smoke.

A bullet accelerated with electromagnetic force going at 3.2 km per second [Mach 9.3] was pretty hard to avoid; the rabbit's head was blown to pieces when it collided with the bullet. Maybe it wasn't necessary to use the electric shock. Donner's firepower was tremendous.

"This is the first time I ate a rabbit…Status!"

Name	Donner	Age	7 Years Old
Race	Human	Level	1
Class	Transmutation Artist (Synergist)		
Strength	300	Vitality	300
Agility	300	Intelligence	800
Dexterity	300	Magic Resistance	350
Skills			

- Transmutation
  - ○ Mineral Appraisal
  - ○ Precision Transmutation
  - ○ Mineral Enquiry
- Magic Manipulation
- Iron Stomach
- Lightning Clad
- Divine Step

⇒ Air Walk

⇒ Flicker

- Language Comprehension

It seems his status goes up when he eats a demon. He noticed that repeatedly eating the same type of demon has a severe diminishing return on the improvements, and eating new type of demons greatly increased his stats.

Hajime wanted to test out “Divine Step.” First, he had to picture an image of the skill, the steps the rabbit made. The focal point was speed; speed so fast that only a blur was seen. He had to guess what [Flicker] did. Hajime remembered that on earth it was known as a famous high-speed movement skill.

An image of the ground exploding from the force of his movement was what he pictured. Magic was gathered instantly to his feet. His step caused a depression on the ground and he vanished. The next time he knew he dived face first into a wall.

“Ouch! C-Controlling this is hard.”

Still, it was a success. If he kept practicing he should be able to move like the rabbit. With his firearm, this would make a powerful combination.

Next was [Air Walk]. This move wasn’t easily activated. Just knowing the name wasn’t enough to perform the skill. While trying stuff out, he remembered when the rabbit made a scaffold out of thin air. Immediately, Hajime started to imagine a transparent shield in the air. He leapt at it to test it.

His face dove straight into the ground.

“Guu!?”

Both his hands went up to hold his face as he trashed on the ground. Writhing in pain, he took a sip of the sacred water to reduce the pain.

“Well, at least I did it…”

The reason he dived into the ground was because when he jump his lower body met the scaffold. What is important is the reason for his stumble. It seems like [Air Walk] was a Special Magic that allowed him to make transparent platforms in the air.

It was great to get two Special Magic in one go; these skills that were derived from “Divine Step.” With this feeling he started to train. His goal was the bear. Hajime would probably be able to defeat it with long distance shooting but he trained just in case. There was the possibility that an even stronger demon could appear. An optimistic person is a dead person in this labyrinth. Once he defeated the bear, he had to search for a way out of here.

Hajime psyched himself up.

* * *

In the labyrinth passage, there was a shadow moving so fast that the only a blurry figure was seen.

The figure was Hajime. Hajime had mastered all of “Divine Step.” He quick stepped around the passage. Using his Air Walk he created platforms to traverse on and repeated his high speed movement; as he searched for his nemesis. Usually a person would prioritizes escaping this area but no matter what Hajime wanted to kill that bear. His heart broke once, he couldn’t help but want to fight the monster that caused it.

“Guru-ua!”

When he encountered a pack of wolves; one of them leapt at him. Using a wire he carefully fired off Donner, which was fixed to his right thigh, while he somersaulted in the air.

Bang!

A bullet being propelled by the explosion of the powdered Combustion Stone and electromagnetic force struck true at its first target. The wolf’s head was crushed instantly. Using “Air Walk” he further in the air. He continuously discharged his firearm towards the jumping wolf. All the targets were not hit, but somehow all of his enemies perished before he emptied his chambers.

Hajime placed Donner between his left armpit, and quickly reloaded. He continued on his mission without glancing back at the

wolves' corpses.

After killing wolves and rabbits for a bit; he finally found his target.

The bear was currently enjoying a meal. Its meal looked like one of those rabbits. When he confirmed it was his arch-nemesis, Hajime laughed fearlessly and advanced towards it.

The bear was the strongest monster on this level; you can even call it a Lord. There were many wolves and rabbits on this level, but there was only one bear. On this level the bear was invincible. All of the demons here payed extra attention to avoid it. A full retreat was in order if they ever encountered him; not even one thought of resistance. No one would voluntarily face it.

However, that was exactly was happening in front of its face.

"Yo, Bear. Long time no see. Was my arm delicious?"

The beast narrowed its sharp eyes. What kind of creature was in front of it? Why is it not showing its back? Why did it not freeze in fear or had despair in its eyes? For the situation to not carry out like usually, all the bear could do was be perplexed.

"It's a revenge match. I'll make you understand that I am an enemy, not a prey."

Hajime extracted Donner and pointed the muzzle at the bear. While in that pose, he questioned himself in his mind. Scared? No. His eyes do not fall into despair; his body did not shake in fear. There is only the earnest desire to survive and rid his adversary.

Hajime's lips raise and change into a fearless smile.

"I'm going to kill you then devour you."

At that declaration, he discharged Donner. Bang! An explosive noise echoed and a bullet made of Tauru ore sped towards the bear at over Mach 9.

"Gu-uu!"

The bear instantly threw its body on the ground to avoid the shot. It avoided the bullet it could not see; the evasive action was earlier than the discharge. Most likely it anticipated the shot from the bloodlust coming off Hajime. As expected of the Lord of this level. For something over 2 m tall, it had a startling reaction speed. It was not able to fully avoided injury, and a part of its shoulder was gouged out; spraying blood onto its white fur.

Anger dwelled in the bear's eyes. He had finally acknowledged Hajime as an enemy.

“Gaaa!”

Roaring, it rushed forward with tremendous speed. Seeing the figure of a 2 m tall beast with spread out stout arms, was a very imposing image.

“Haha! That’s it! I’m your enemy! Not some prey you can hunt!”

While taking in the frightful pressure from the bear, Hajime did not break his smile. Here was the turning point. Thoughts of his left arm and broken heart racked his brain. The cause of his apostasy was going down. A ceremony needed to move towards the future. If he didn’t, his heart would not compromise; this he believed in.

The bear comes rushing back. Donner is fired. A supersonic bullet drove towards the area in between the bear’s eyebrows, but somehow the charging bear was able to avoid it. How did he have such a reaction for such a massive figure?

When the bear had entered its strike range, it brandished its claws. The Special Magic it had was activated, and its three claws seemed to distort. In Hajime’s mind, the memory of the bisected rabbit that tried to dodge that move; played in his mind. Instead of dodging at the last moment, he choose to back step in full force.

In a grand style, the bear’s claws passed the area Hajime left. The claws did not touch the ground at all; three groves were engraved into the ground.

The bear gave an irritated roar at missing his target. Clang-clang, something rolled close to the bear. A dark green ball-shaped object about 5 cm in diameter caught the bears attention as it laid at its feet. The moment the bear was able to study it, the object emitted an intense light.

Hajime had made this flash grenade. The principle is simple. Fill a Green Light Stone's magic to the brim. Coat the stone's surface so the light does not escape. Powdered Combustion Stone is compressed into the center of the flash grenade. A line of Combustion Stone powder is used as a fuse; it leads to the hole into the center compartment. Using "Lightning Clad", Hajime lights the outside powder that will fire up the compressed center. When the ignition reaches the center, we get the explosion. The moment it breaks, the stone will release all the light it had hoarded. Hajime had created the fuse to last 3 seconds. There were a lot of problems, but it was a gem of pride for Hajime.

The bear had never encountered such a weapon, so it was completely blinded for a moment when it stared right at it. While flourishing his arm in chaos, it struggled to roar. Not being able to see anything caused it to panic.

Hajime was not going to let this chance go. Donner was once again fired. The bullet that was electromagnetically accelerated hit the left shoulder of the bear, and blew it away from the base.

"Guru-uaaa!"

A terrified scream originated from the bear when it suffered a never known sensation in its pain free life. Abundant amount of blood started to flow from the wound. The left arm that was blown

off was twirling in the arm, and fell on the ground with a thud.

“Wow, what a coincidence…”

That was not his intended aim. Hajime was still not an expert marksman. He had fought with many enemies that just rushed forward. Unless you had full knowledge of its movement, it was very difficult to fire a pinpoint shot. So the bullet taking the left arm was totally not planned.

Hajime continued to fire at the rampaging bear that had not recovered. Even though the bear was confused, it instinctively reacted to the bloodlust that came with the shot; it jumped to the side to avoid it. Using his “Flicker”, Hajime landed near the bear’s fallen arm. To the slightly recovered bear, he lifted the left arm to show it off.

A bit slowly, using his strengthened jaw from consuming demon flesh; he tore into the bear flesh. He was reproducing the nightmare that the bear showed him.

“Chew… Chew… As always, it sucks. How is it better than the other though?”

While he said it, Hajime crouches down while being vigilant of the bear. Bear did not move. There was no fear in its eyes. Still, it couldn’t move carelessly because of its recovering eyesight and the show he just saw.

At that intermission, he continued his meal. Then came the incident. The intense pain he felt the first time he ate demon flesh returned.

“Tsu!?”

Hurriedly, Hajime tried to take the sacred water. Though it wasn’t as fierce as that time, he could not fully stand; he fell to one knee and his face distorted from the pain. Because the bear had so much more power than the wolf and rabbit; it was going to cause the pain.

The bear did not care about his situation. When it saw the chance, it started to charge again. Hajime did not move from his crouch. At this rate he would be trampled. When it seemed like it would be a reproduction of their first meeting; Hajime’s lips split into a grin.

He put Donner back in its holster, and pressed the ground with his right hand. His hand became clad with lightning. A maximum powered “Lightning Clad” traversed the liquid on the ground. When the bear stepped into the area, the power ruthlessly assaulted him.

The liquid on the ground was the bear’s blood. A sea of blood scattered like fountains. Hajime picked up the bear’s bleeding left arm, and scattered the blood to the winds. He connected the surrounding blood puddles with his. Eating in battle and showing off was not something he did. Although he did not factor in the possibility of pain from consuming the flesh. Hajime had already intended to lay a trap for it. He wanted to eat the arm to anger the bear enough to get it to rush straight at him. The plan went a little haywired, but the results were alright.

When the bear stepped into the sea of blood, the strong electric current and voltage violated its body. Nerve to nerve it ravished; grilled the muscles. Even at full power, Hajime's Special Magic fall short of the original. He couldn't launch his lightning and also his output was halved. At this moment, it was enough to temporarily paralyze. It wouldn't be weird if this spell had enough power to vaporize a human.

"Rugu-uuuu!"

The bear fell down with a thud into a puddle of its own blood. Its eyes were still bright and glaring at Hajime.

Hajime just returned the glare. Slowly he stood up while enduring the pain. Unholstering Donner, he placed the muzzle on the bear's head.

"Become my chow."

After he said his words, he pulled the trigger. The bullet faithfully executed its master's will; it pulverized the bear's head.

The gunshot ripped an echo through the labyrinth. Not for a moment did the bear takes its eyes off Hajime, not even till the end. Neither did Hajime.

There was no exhilarating feeling like he imagined, but he didn't feel empty either. He just did what he had to. In order to live, in order to earn the right to survive in this area.

Hajime closed his eyes, and faced his own heart. He determined he would live this way. Fighting was not something he liked. Pain was not his ideal companion. Starving was on the last of his to do list. Live, was what he wanted to do. He crushed unreasonableness, like he would to his enemies. All in order to survive.

He will live that way…And…Return home.

"Yeah, I want to return. Other things did not matter. I'll find my own way home. I will fulfill my wish. Anyone that gets in my way, no matter the being…"

Hajime opened his eyes and broke into a fearless laugh.

" KILL"

* * *

Name: Hajime			
Age: 17 Years Old			
Level: 1			
Class: Transmutation Artist (Synergist)			
Strength: 300			
Stamina: 300			
Agility: 300			
Resistance: 300			
Magic Resistance: 300			

Skills

- Transmutation
    - Mineral Appraisal
    - Precision Transmutation
    - Mineral Enquiry
    - Mineral Separation
    - Mineral Fusion
- Magic Manipulation
- Iron Stomach
- Lightning Clad
- Divine Step

⇒ Air Walk

⇒ Flicker

- Air Claws
- Language Comprehension

Arifureta: Volume 2 Chapter 2

Despair and Decisions (Classmate Side 1)

A little back in time.

Hairihi Royal Palace, in a room given to the summoned, Yaegashi Shizuku was staring at her best friend sleep in the dark.

5 days have passed since they had a taste of battle and loss in the Dungeon. When they exited the Dungeon, they stayed overnight at Horald. The party came back to the capital on a high-speed carriage early in the morning. There was no one in the mood to continue the combat exercises in the Dungeon. Incompetence was the cause of death for a brave man. Both the king and church would need to hear the report. They were not allowed to break in this place. Before something worse happened, they needed to care for the party of heroes.

Shizuku remembered when they returned to the kingdom. She wanted to wake Kaori up in the morning, so she went to sleep early. When they returned the news of Hajime death was reported. Everyone was astonished, but they breathed a sigh of relief when it was the “useless” Hajime that passed. Even the king and Ishtar was the same. There wasn’t any of the strong heroes to die in the Dungeon. If they could not return alive from just exploring the dungeon, how would they fight the Devils? The chosen heroes of God must be unrivaled.

The king and Ishtar had discretion. There had been among them that had slandered and abused Hajime. It was not spoken to the public, but it was a talked about in secret in the noble society. They thought it was good that the incompetent one died. An apostle of God that was useless; naturally they would die. Now they were speaking ill as one pleased. Shizuku really wanted to go berserk and kill those people many times.

Kouki and his strong sense of justice did not stand up against such mistreatment; she thought something was weird. Did he think that if he protested against the king and church, it would leave a bad impression. People who cursed Hajime seemed to be penalized… rumors were spread that Kouki was an anxious brave hero who pondered his incompetence. Hajime's reputation was not going to change just because a few people said so.

At that time, it was undeniable who saved them. Hajime was the one that kept the Behemoth in check to allow them to escape. To think that he died because of a stray shot from a classmate… though that is what he said.

She did not talk her classmates about her thoughts of the attempted friendly fire at that time. They should have a grasp of their magic, when she tried to approach the suspect it unmentionable because of the countless magic casted at that time. Because it would prove he was a murderer.

To escape reality, she wondered what Hajime did to cause such a thing. Dead man tell no tales. Rather than look for the culprit recklessly, if she left it alone than it would be done. The classmates opinion was in harmony and they did not communicate it.

To clarify the details at the time, Meld thought it was necessary to interview the students. Just like the students he choose to escape from reality, even if it was hard to regard as a mistake. Even if it was negligence he carried it out for the benefit of the students. To leave such a thing unsettled would only bring trouble later on. Above all, Meld wanted to make clear. Meld failed his promise to save Hajime and his heart ached at that.

Meld action did not come true. Ishtar had banned any scrutiny of the students. Meld clung to it, but even the king forbid it.

“If you knew, you will get angry.”

Kaori had not woken up since that day. There was no abnormalities discovered by the doctor’s diagnosis. The body, probably because of mental shock, went into a deep sleep as a defense mechanism. Time will pass normally if they sobered up.

Shizuku held Kaori’s hands. She prayed to not let her best friend hurt anymore.

Kaori’s hand twitched at that.

“Kaori! Can you hear me!? Kaori!”

Shizuku desperately called out. Kaori’s closed eyelids started to shiver. Further, Shizuku called out for her friend. In response to that call Kaori gripped her friend’s hand, then she slowly awoke.

“Kaori!”

“…Shizuku-chan?”

Learning on the bed, Kaori saw Shizuku overlooking her with tears in her eyes. Kaori just blindly looked over her surrounding. Shizuku looked at her and waited until Kaori gathered herself more before calling her.

“Yeah, its me. Kaori. how is your body? No discomfort?”

“I’m fine. Just weary because I was sleeping…”

“Well, you have been sleeping for 5 days…”

Shizuku forced a smile and tried to assist Kaori in standing up, who was trying to ask Shizuku how much she slept. Kaori reacted at that.

“5 days? Why…I…I went to the Dungeon…and then…”

Her eyes gradually came into focus. Shizuku tried to change the topic when she had a bad feeling. However, Kaori recalled her memories too fast.

“And then…Nagumo-kun…”

“…That is.”

Shizuku’s face morphed into a painful expression when wondering what she should tell her. Kaori realized the tragedy in her memories when she saw the state Shizuku was in. However, it wasn’t easy for her to accept such a reality.

“…Lies. Isn’t it? Shizuku-chan. When I fainted, you guys saved Nagumo-kun, right? Right? Isn’t it? This is the castle room. Everyone came back, right? I wonder if Nagumo-kun is training. In the training center. I’ll head over for a moment. I have to thank Nagumo-kun. Say something, Shizuku-chan…”

Kaori who wanted to escape from the harsh reality spun her words over and over again; while she mention about searching for Hajime. Shizuku caught her arm and didn’t let go. She had a sorrowful expression, but still she stared at Kaori.

“…Kaori, you understand, right?…He’s not here.”

“Stop…”

“Kaori, remember.”

“Please, stop…”

“He, Nagumo-kun…”

“No, stop…please, stop!”

“Kaori! He’s dead!”

“Wrong! He can’t die! He absolutely can’t have! How can you say such a horrible thing? Even if it’s Shizuku-chan, I will not forgive!”

Kaori shaked her and started to escape from Shizuku’s grasp. Shizuku did not let her go and embraced her. She was trying to nurse Kaori through her hug.

“Let me go! Let me go! If I don’t search for Nagumo-kun! I beg you…he is absolutely alive..let me go～”

Kaori dropped her face into Shizuku’s chest while shouting “Let me go!” and sobbed. Clinging to each other, she started to shout louder. Shizuku just continued to hug her. Hoping it would soften just a little of her pain.

How long did they stay like that? The sky was dyed red by the setting sun. Kaori was motionless in Shizuku’s arms while she sniffed. Shizuku asked in worry.

“Kaori…”

“…Shizuku-chan…Nagumo-kun…He fell…He isn’t here…”

Kaori whispered in a voice so quiet it sounded like it would disappear. Shizuku did not want to sugar coat it, it would only be a temporary comfort. The lie could come back and hurt more than it was softened. She did not want to see her friend in pain.

“That’s right.

“That time, whose magic hit Nagumo-kun? Who?

“I don’t know. No one wants to mention that moment. Its scary. What if it was me…”

“That so.”

“Do you have a grudge?”

“…I’m not sure. If someone knew…I will surely blame them. But… no one knows…I think this is better. For sure, I wouldn’t be able to stand it…”

“I see…”

Kaori looked downcast as she talks. She wiped her face and eyes and faced Shizuku, and declared resolutely.

“Shizuku-chan. I, I don’t believe it. Nagumo-kun is alive. I don’t believe he is dead.”

“Kaori, that is…”

Shizuku had another sorrowful expression trying to persuade Kaori. Kaori clasped Shizuku’s cheeks with both hands, and said with a smile.

“I now. I know its weird to think that someone could survive that. …But its not like we checked. The possibility is less than 1%. If we did not check, its not 0%. I’m going to believe.”

“Kaori…”

“I’ll become stronger. I’ll become strong enough to prevent an event like that from happening. I will make sure with my own eyes. Nagumo-kun’s fate…Shizuku-chan.”

“What?”

“Please help me.”

“…”

They both stared at each other. Kaori’s eyes did not show any signs of insanity. She will not give up until she genuinely find out. This kind of Kaori will not be moved. Kaori is known for being stubborn when she gets going.

Usually, you wouldn’t take what Kaori said seriously and let it go. Believing that someone could a fall into that abyss was just crazy. Everyone would try to correct her. That’s why…

“Of course, I’ll agree. Until you are satisfied I’ll tag along.”

“Shizuku-chan!”

Kaori hugged and thanked her. Shizuku said “No need more thanks. What are friends for?” The title of Samurai Girl wasn’t just for show.

At that time the door opened.

“Shizuku! Kaori woke up…”

“Oh, How are you, Kaori?”

It was Kouki and Ryutaro. They had come to check on her. Training had just finished and they choose to come here afterwards. From “that” day, they concentrated even more in training. Wonder what they thought of Hajime’s death. They reluctantly withdrew and wanted revenge. Hajime was the one that saved them from a crisis. Never will they be that useless again.

Two more people entered that caused them to stiffen. Shizuku was doubtful.

“You guys, how did…”

“S-Sorry.”

“W-We got in the way.”

They quickly left the room and didn’t answer her question. She finally became aware of what they saw. Kaor was staring at them blankly. Shizuku noticed the cause.

Currently, Kaori sat on Shizuku’s knee, while she had both hands on her cheeks. It looked like they were about to kiss. Shizuku was supporting Kaori but it looked like she was embracing her.

This scene looked like a Yuri scene and it was splendidly done. If

this was the manga world there would be flowers blooming in the background.

Shizuku sighed deeply. She couldn't bare the situation so she yelled.

"Hurry up and get back here! You freaking fools!

Arifureta: Volume 2 Chapter 3

Path of Escape

“Damn it, there is nothing…”

Three days after killing the bear. Hajime has been searching for an escape to the upper levels. He had already searched about 80% of the level. After eating the bear, his status had risen. There were no longer any wonders here, he had vastly explored the area with a quick pace. However, nothing was found even though he searched so much.

No, saying he didn’t find anything was misleading. Hajime had found stairs two day ago; that led downwards into the higher number floor. A floor should always have a stair that led up towards the surface but this one did not have one it seemed.

Why not make a road to the upper level? This method was ignored after already trying it. Within a certain range, his transmutation did not work on the walls. While on the floor he could freely transmute, the very top and bottom of the floor had some kind of protection. This “Orcus Dungeon” was created during ancient times and it was full of mysteries. When he encountered anything new, it wasn’t that unexpected.

That is why he was looking for a way up, but he had to make a decision if he did not find it. To venture further down this Dungeon or not.

“…Dead end? At this point I searched all the branchings. I wonder what happened.”

Hajime decided to stop looking for a way up and breathed out a deep sigh at that decision. He proceeded to advance towards the room that contained the stairs leading deeper into the Dungeon.

The stairs looked like it was sloppily made. It would have been more correct to call it an uneven slope, rather than stairs. He looked ahead to the stairs and noticed that it exudes a creepy atmosphere; with its complete darkness where no Green Light Stone was present. Like a mouth of a huge monster swallowing him up. Hajime felt that once he went in, there was no coming out.

“Ha! Bring it on! Anything getting in my way, I’ll kill and devour.”

While thinking about such an idea, Hajime laughed through his nose and smiled. He stepped towards the darkness with no hesitation.

The level was very dark. Although that was expected for an underground dungeon, but all the previous levels he visited had Green Light Stones in them. It wasn’t like he was devoid of all vision. This level really did not have any light source. Hajime choose to rest for a bit to allow his eyes to get used to the darkness. He was expecting to see a little more, but there was no difference. He decided to take out his Green Stone lamp from his improvised back, that was connected to a wire made of out of the bears fur.

It was suicidal to have a light in this darkness if a monster was attracted to it. However, he couldn't continue if he couldn't see. Hajime did not want to occupy his only hand to hold this lamp, so he fastened it to his left elbow.

He had a feeling that something was shining in the depths of the passage when he walked for a while. That got him to raise his caution to the max. Advancing while hiding as much as possible, he left an unpleasant sign on his left side. He pointed the lamp at that direction. A gray liard approximately 2m in length was sticking on the wall, glaring at Hajime with golden eyes.

The golden eyes were charged with light. In that moment,

"Tsu!?"

Hajime left arm started to give of a strange sound and noticed it was getting petrified. Instantly the lamp that was fastened to his arm was soon petrified completely, and shattered into a million pieces. With the light source lost, darkness ruled the area again. The petrification on his left side was already reaching his shoulder.

Hajime clicked his tongue while he took out some sacred water from his chest holster; which was made from demon fur and wire. As expected, the petrification halted and eventually his left arm returned to normal.

It sure had done it! He cursed inwardly, and took out a flash grenade from his waist pouch. Hajime threw it towards the gold eyed lizard. At the same time, gold eyes started to simmer again in

the darkness. Hajime left the area by using “Flicker”, and did not see the gaze. The rock that was behind where Hajime used to be, changed color. Soon the rock crumbled as it weathered. Wicked Eyes of Petrification, was what Hajime linked with the golden eyes. This lizard was like a basilisk often seen in a RPG.

Hajime closed his eyes while he took out Donner and brandished it.

Bang! The surrounding was bathed in intense light as the flash grenade went off.

“Ku-ua!”

For an entity that matured in the darkness, this was the first time it had experienced that much light, and it confused it. The figure of that confused basilisk emerged from the darkness. Hajime fired without a thought. He aimed well and soon the bullet found its target in the basilisk’s skull. Brain matter splashed against the wall as the head was blown to pieces. The bullet continued through the head into the wall, and burning rocks could be heard. Since electromagnetic force was used to accelerate the bullet, the places it hit emit a high temperature. It was so intense a heat that, right now, only the Tauru ore could handle it.

Hajime approached the basilisk while he stayed vigilant to his surroundings. Promptly he cleaved the meat off of the corpse and left the area. He did not feel safe eating in an area with so little visibility. Hajime decided to push forward and continue his search for the time being.

He had searched for many hours but he could not find the stairs. A lot of ores were collected and demons killed during this time. Since it was so inconvenient to carry all this, he made a base for himself.

When he found a suitable place, he used his transmutation to create the space. He was able to make his base without any problems. Hajime continued transmuting until he had a 6 tatami sized room. Without forgetting, he placed a pale basketball sized ore in the hollow recess of the wall. This ore was God's Crystal. Underneath the ore was placed a contained to catch the dripping water.

Hajime had started to call the crystal "Potion Stone" and the sacred water as "Potion." It really was like the games equivalent, but its effects were much stronger.

"Well, let's have a meal."

Hajime retrieved the meat out of his backpack. He used his lightning powers to cook them. Today's menu was the basilisk meat, an owl that could fire its feathers like a shotgun, and a six legged cat. No seasoning.

"Itadakimasu."

After a moment of eating, pain started to well in his body. The body was being strengthened. It seemed that these monsters were stronger than the bear. It was certainly true that the environment and darkness made it troublesome. Hajime did not really feel that since Donner could blow any of them away.

Drinking the “Potion”, he continued to eat while ignoring the pain. His phantom limb pain had returned and it was getting stronger.

“Chomp, Fuu–. Gochisousama. Now then, Status…”

He took out his Status Plate as he said that. Hajime’s current state was…

Name	Nagumo Hajime		
Age	17 Years Old		
Race	Human		
Level	24		
Class	Transmutation Artist (Synergist)		
Strength	350	Vitality	350
Dexterity	350	Resistance	350
Intelligence	500	Magic Resistance	500

Skills

- Transmutation
  - Mineral Appraisal
  - Precision Transmutation
  - Mineral Enquiry
  - Mineral Separation
  - Mineral Fusion
- Magic Manipulation
- Iron Stomach
- Lightning Clad
- Divine Step
  - Air Walk
  - Flicker
- Air Claws

- Night Vision
- Perception
- Petrification Resistance
- Language Comprehension

His stats had risen just like expected. He also had acquired three new skills. That was when he noticed that he could see the surrounding more clearly. This seem to be attributed to “Night Vision.” The dungeon had a gloomy disposition, and on this level it was an advantage. The rest were passive skills. Regrettably, the skill he got from basilisk was “Resistasnce” and not the actual “Petrification” skill. The Wicked Eyes of Petrification! He was disappointed he missed out on such a cool skill.

Hajime started to transmute in order to replenish his consumables. Just to make one bullet, he needed a lot of concentration. The process needed ultimate precision. It needed to fit perfectly into Donner’s firing ring. How much propellent needed was carefully compressed and measured. One single bullet would take 30 minutes to make, and he thought he was pretty good at the process already. He admired himself for being able to display such tremendous power in his time of life and death.

His power was frightening but it needed a lot of time and effort to use. He wasn’t dispirited because he could practice his transmutation while making it. Thanks to all this bullet-making, he was able to remove impurities and separate minerals easily; fusion of minerals were easier too. The only comparison to Hajime’s transmutation skill was the head crafter in the Kingdom.

Hajime continued his transmuting in silence. He had still not advanced down a level. There was no idea where this abyss would lead to. When the transmuting was done, he planned to continue

with his search. Returning home as soon as possible was his mission. Hajime made an expression as he declared that mission to himself. In that dark abyss with the pale light from the “Potion Stone”, a resolute face could be seen.

Except for the times he needed to replenish his supplies at base; Hajime continued his exploration. It was not known when he rested as he searched through the huge labyrinth. The darkness no longer mattered with his “Night Vision”, and he was able to sense any being in a 10 m around him because of the “Perception” skill. With these skills, he was able to speed up his search.

Finally, he had found the stairs. He took the stairs down without any hesitation.

On this level, the ground seemed to be some kind of sticky quagmire. It was extremely hard to move his stuck feet. Frowning, he created platforms to walk on with his “Air Walk” and continued his search.

Hajime advanced while checking the surrounding minerals with his “Mineral Perception” skill. He found one interesting mineral during his investigation.

[TL: Quick note, you can see that he does not have this skill listed in his status. The actual skill name in kanji does not show up in the page either. So, this means one of three things. The author forgot to include the skill or its a collaboration of “Perception” and “Mineral Enquiry”. The last possibility is that he misspelled the skill.]

Fulham Ore
Black shiny ore. When melted it becomes tar-like. Melting point at 50°C. In its tar form, ignition point at 100°C. Heat from ignition can reach 3000°C. Burning time is dependent on amount of tar.

"…No way."

Hajime drew a stiff smile and rose his foot up slowly. He stepped on the tar-like liquid on the floor a few times, and it dripped from his boots. This tar-like liquid covered this whole level floor and its what made it seem like a quagmire.

"I-I can't use my gun…"

Although he didn't believe his gun could produce 100˚C in heat, he did not want to chance the chain ignition of 3000˚C on this whole level. Even with the "Potion", he wasn't sure he would survive.

"I can't use my railgun or "Lightning Clad"."

Donner was a powerful weapon. Even without the electromagnetic force, it produced enough power from the Combustion ore. At least when considering normal demons. For example, against Traum Soldiers it would be enough for this weakened Donner to deal with. It may even deal some damage to a Behemoth. Demons in this

abyss are a total different story. The monsters in the higher number floor were just animals. Can he really defeat the demons on this floor with only his handicapped Donner?

When that uneasy thought went through his mind, the corner of his lips angled up.

“That’s fine, it doesn’t change what I need to do. Just kill and eat.”

Hajime continued his exploration after sealing his “railgun” and “Lightning Clad”.

A three-way intersection came into view after traveling for a bit. He stepped towards the left passage to check the nearby walls.

At that moment,

Clash!

“Tsu!?”

A shark-like demon jumped out from the tar; displaying its huge mouth lined with sharp teeth. It closed the gaping jaw at Hajime’s head. Promptly, Hajime bent over and dodged the jaws, but it left him shuddering.

(“Perception” didn’t pick it up!)

Ever since he got the skill, Hajime had been constantly been using it. The skill should be able to pick up any monster within 10m of him. However, he was unable to sense that shark at all.

With a kerplunk the shark had returned into the tar, and Hajime could not sense it again.

(Shit! I really can’t sense him!)

Hajime grinded his teeth at this incomprehensible state of affairs. He stopped to quickly use his “Air Walk” skill.

As if aiming for that timing, the shark jumped out again.

“Don’t underestimate me!”

Hajime fired at the shark that was midair when he jumped and somersaulted. Air is torn apart as the bullet was shot from Donner, but it wasn’t enough to eat through the enemy. The shot was exquisitely time and hit the shark in the back.

However,

“Crap! Is this how its going to be?”

The bullet was like rubber to the shark, and it only dented the scales as it was repelled. Its scales seemed to be able to mitigate physical impacts.

“Gu!”

Using the momentum it had, it jumped into the tar. The shark inverted itself marvelously and aimed at the area Hajime would land after his somersault. Hajime was able to dodge somehow by twisting his body, but the shark got a small part of his flank. With a shock, Hajime tell into the tar. He quickly stood up and jumped into the air; with his whole body dyed black by the tar. The shark emerged from below Hajime’s previous spot and smashed its jaws together.

Hajime developed a cold sweat as he was jumping through the air with “Air Walk”. Even if he was being cornered, his face was still smiling.

“Bring it on!”

He never stopped moving as he used “Air Walk”; he was looking for a chance to attack. Showing the concentration that was forged by training his transmutation. As his concentration rose, he tuned out all other unnecessary thoughts and surroundings. Even if “Perception” couldn’t sense it, that was no problem. Originally he did not even have that skill. The shark will definitely show up when it attacks.

Hajime continued jumping around while concentrating. Abruptly one of his steps broke his balance. The shark did not overlook this chance, and pounced from behind in Hajime's blind spot.

"Simplicity, helps."

Immediately, Hajime rebuilt his broken balance. With the shark perched up in the air as it attacked. Hajime took out Donner with his right hand.

Blood splashed to the floor as the shark's flank was torn and falls on the tar. The shark struggled as it splashed in the tar.

Hajime had purposely shown a weakness to lure the shark in, so he could time and place his shot. He had not shot Donner regularly; he had infused the magic "Air Claws" into the bullet. The skill he got from the bear.

Approaching the downed shark, Hajime brandished Donner towards its head. With "Air Claws" he bisected the shark's head. Although he couldn't produce three claws like the bear, but its sharpness far surpasses any famous swords of this world. This magic was very useful if they got in proximity.

"So, lets check why I can't sense it."

Hajime licked his lips as he said that.

After carving the shark of its meat and securing it, he continued his exploration till he found stairs.

* * *

6 Tatami sized = 2.73m x 3.64m

Sizes of rooms in Japan are often measured in the number of tatami (Straw mats) it can hold. So when you mention a 6 tatami sized room, the room could fit that many on the floor. Tatami sizes vary between different regions of Japan, but Nagoya's standard is about 1.653 square feet.

Itadakimasu = Thanks for the meal (At start of meal).

Gochisousama = Thanks for the meal (After meal).

Arifureta: Volume 2 Chapter 4

The Sealed Room in the Abyss

Hajime's walkthrough of the Dungeon continues.

Since the tar level, he had advanced 50 levels deeper. Because Hajime did not have a sense of time there, he did not know how much time had passed. But the progress he was making was being done in an astonishing speed.

During that time, he was in a desperate struggle. Countless times he had encountered stronger demons and battled for his life.

For example, one level had a thin poisonous fog covering the whole floor. There was a 2m frog (Rainbow colored) that spit poisoned sputum at him, and a moth that spread scales that caused paralysis. If he didn't drink his "Potion", he would have died just from being on that level.

The iridescent frog's poison was an agent that targeted the nerves and lit it up with pain. His experience with the pain was comparable to the pain from his first taste of demon flesh. He would have died if he didn't consume the "Potion" in his molar. Hajime had placed a small chewable container behind his molars that contained "Potion". He was happy he prepared just in case of emergencies.

Naturally, he had consumed two of them. There was friction when he ate the moth, because of the supercompensation pain, he resolved it by consuming the “Potion”. Vexed at the fact that the moth tasted better than the frog.

There was also a floor that looked like a dense forest, how it came to be in an underground labyrinth puzzled Hajime. Hajime thought this was the most unpleasant place so far because its extremely hot temperature and dense humidity. The demons of this level were a huge centipede and sentient trees.

When he was traversing the jungle, a huge centipede suddenly fell from atop the trees. Hajime felt sick at the sight of it, and developed goose bumps on his whole body. Each time a section it was hit, it would separate. Fight one of these centipede was like fighting 30 monsters*. Donner was blazing from use, but there were too many for it to deal with. Reloading was taking too long, so he switched to his “Air Claws”. He even started to throw inexperienced kicks because of how desperate he was. After this encounter, Hajime was determined to develop his speed loading and kicks. This was decided while he was washed away the purple fluids from the centipede.

[T/N: *There was a description with this sentence but I did not know how to translate it. The literal translation was a monster like G black kitchen. I thought it was maybe referencing something from monster hunter because of the G, but I did not know what to make of the black kitchen.]

The tree demons were like Treants from RPG games. Its underground roots would thrust out from the ground and vines acted as whips for them. However, the biggest feature of the treants were not these trivial attacks. When they were in a pinch, they would hurl the red fruits that littered their heads. There was not any offensive ability to it, but Hajime though to try it out. He

was rigid for a few dozen minutes. It was not a poison. The fruit was insanely delicious. Sweet and fresh the red fruit was comparable to a watermelon. Not an apple.

The unpleasantness he felt on this level was blown away. Every thought vanished from his head temporarily. After many dozen days he had eaten something other than meat. Hajime's eyes were completely of a hunter, his prey were these treants. After he was satisfied he continued his journey, though the treant-like demons almost went extinct.

With that feeling he advanced through 50 levels. There is still no sign of an end. Hajime's current status…

Name	Hajime		
Age	17 Years Old		
Race	Human		
Level	82		
Class	Transmutation Artist (Synergist)		
Strength	970		
Vitality	970		
Dexterity	960		
Agility	960		
Magic	760		
Magic Resistance	760		
Skills			

- Transmutation
  - Mineral Appraisal
  - Precision Transmutation
  - Mineral Enquiry
  - Mineral Separation
  - Mineral Fusion
  - Replica Transmutation
- Magic Manipulation
- Iron Stomach
- Lightning Clad
- Divine Step

- Air Walk
- Flicker
- Grand Legs

- Air Claws
- Night Vision
- Far Vision
- Perception
- Magic Perception
- Hide Presence
- Poison Resist
- Paralysis Resist
- Petrification Resistance
- Language Comprehension

Hajime was inside the base he created for this 50th level. He was stacking up his training for his transmutation, firearm technology, and kicks. Even though he had discovered the next stairs, he did not take them. Because he had discovered a foreign area on this level.

The space around the area was eerie. At the end of this side area was a solemn majestic double door about 3m in height. On the flanks of the doors were two one-eyed giants sculptures enshrined into the walls; only their upper bodies were sculpted it seemed.

Chills ran down his whole body the moment he set foot there. Temporarily he had a dangerous feeling about this. He did not have the intention to avoid this and prepared his equipment. Eventually a “change” appeared. Do not go and check it.

Hajime was feeling expectation and unpleasantness at the same time. If he opened the door, he was sure that a disaster was waiting

to meet him. However, a new wind blew into this Dungeon.

“As if it was a Pandora’s box…I wonder what aspiration it contained.”

His current possessed weapons, martial arts, and skills. One by one he checked and prepared them to make sure they were in perfect condition. When he finished this task, Hajime unholstered Donner. He closed his eyes gently. Already he had decided to be resolute. It wasn’t bad to repeat his resolution. Hajime looked into himself and took an oath.

“I am going to survive and return home. To Japan, to home…I’ll return. Those who are obstacles are enemies. To enemies…kill!”

Hajime opened his eyes and daring smile graced his face.

Vigilantly, Hajime came to the rooms with the door and advanced. Without incident he arrived at the door. More and more wonderful decorations could be seen on the door as he neared. At the center, two magic formations were drawn in the recesses.

“I don’t understand. I’ve studied a lot, but I have never seen these formulas.”

When he was called incompetent, Hajime had laid emphasis on knowledge to make up for his low physical abilities. He didn’t finish learning all he could, but it was weird that he had never seen

any magical formulas like the ones presented to him.

“Is it an old system?”

While guessing, Hajime examined the door, but he was not able to understand anything new. Because it was very important, he was alert for any traps. Hajime was not going to be able to decipher any of this with his current degree of knowledge.

“Can’t be helped. Let’s go with the usual transmuting.”

He tried to pull and push the door to no avail. As usual, he tried to force a way in with his transmuting. Hajime put his right hand on the door and started to transmute.

However, immediately…

Crackle!

“Uwa!?”

A red electric discharge runs through the door and into Hajime’s hand. Smoke bursted out from his hand. Swearing, he quickly swallowed some “Potion”. Immediately an accident occurred.

Ooooooooh!!

Suddenly, a deep voice cry echoed throughout the room. Hajime gained some distance from the door by backstepping. He placed his hand on his waist holster to prepare to use Donner at anytime.

The cries continued to echo, and the identity of the voice began to move.

“Well, that was a cliche of a cliche.”

While Hajime was muttering and smiling to himself. The sculptures of the two giants that flanked the door started to crumble. Gray skin that was assimilated with the wall soon turned dark green.

The one-eyed giant looked exactly like a fantasy cyclops. A 4m large sword appeared in its hands, though he didn’t know where it came from. It turned its eyes towards Hajime and was freeing its buried lower body to eliminate the intruder.

At that moment,

Dopan!

A bullet made of Tauru ore, which was accelerated through a railgun, pierced the cyclops only eye. It stirred around its brain for a bit before it bursted out of its head, and pulverized the back wall.

The left cyclops blankly stared at what happened to the dead cyclops. After it was shot, the cyclops body was still convulsing, while it lean forward and fell. The shock created from the impact shook the whole room, and thick dust danced around the room.

“Sorry, I’m not the type of bad guy to sense the mood or wait around.”

Exactly like a devil. No, given the carnage Hajime experienced it was just a natural reflex. Still…pity for the cyclops (right).

Probably, it was a guardian for the door that is sealing something. Furthermore it was in a place at the bottom of the abyss, there wasn’t many visitors. When it finally answered the call of duty. Maybe it was filled with joy. Without even seeing much of the other party, its head was blown apart. If you can’t call this pity, what would you call it?

An expression of horror was on the cyclops’ (left) face as it gazed at Hajime. Its eyes seemed like it was conveying “What the heck did this guy do?” Hajime was glaring at the unmoving cyclops. The cyclops did not know what guns were so it stayed vigilant and lowered its waist to prepare to move at any time. Soon a roar escaped from its lips, as the cyclops lost its temper at the unmoving Hajime.

Shortly after, its face dived to the ground.

The moment it stepped forward it lost strength in its leg and fell forward. Confused, the cyclops tried to violently stand up and to

move, but he couldn't gather any strength.

Hajime slowly approached the growling cyclops. The steady footsteps were like a countdown. Taking the gun he placed the muzzle onto the cyclops head. Click, the trigger was pulled without hesitation.

Dopan!

A gunshot resounded through the whole room. However, an unexpected event happened. The cyclops body illuminated for just a moment, and in that moment its skin cause the bullet to repel.

"Mu."

Hajime guessed that it used Special Magic. Its inherent magic was increasing its defense significantly.

His mouth contorted at the fallen cyclops that he thought was foolish. Hajime took the muzzle away from the cyclops and drove a kick into its head. "Grand Kick". The kick he delivered was just as beautiful as the kick from the rabbit. It forced the cyclops to face up on its back. Again, the muzzle was pressed against its exposed eye.

Hajime felt like the cyclops was saying "Wait a moment" but he ignored it and pulled the trigger. As expected, the bullet penetrated through its head; guess it wasn't able to strengthen its eye.

“Hmm, Approximately 20 seconds. A little slow…because of the size?”

Hajime watched the cyclops to analyze the experimental result. Why did the cyclops suddenly fell over and was unable to move? Because of the “paralysis grenade”. The grenade was made by gathering the scales from the moth and placing it in a grenade. It is then released from the grenade with a small-scale blast; the results could be seen on the cyclops. When the cyclops (left) started at the other cyclops was the time Hajime released his grenade.

“Well, its okay. I’ll harvest the meat later…”

Hajime considered glancing at the door. Using “Air Claws”, Hajime took the magic stone out of the cyclops body. Without minding the blood, he craved both cyclops for their magic stone and approached the door to compare these fist-sized stones to the two recesses. They were a perfect fit.

Instantly, red magic sprouted from the stone and poured into the magic square. The light settled after a moment and an opening sound could be heard. Simultaneously, the magic speared into the surrounding walls and emitted light; like Hajime had not seen in a long time.

Hajime’s eyes twinkled a little, he cautiously and quietly opened the door.

There was not a single source of light behind and door. Darkness spread in the big space the room had. With the help of his “Night Vision” and the new lights, Hajime was able to make out the room little by little. Two columns of pillars lined up all the way into the depths. The room was made from finely crafted marbles and it looked similar to the Church room they were first summoned into. In the center of the room was a huge cube of stone that reflected the incoming light and lustered.

Hajime was staring at the cube, when he noticed that something was growing in the front center of the cube.

Trying to confirm what he saw, Hajime pushed open the door and checked the vicinity. Like a horror film, the door would slam closed when you were in trouble.

However, before Hajime could fix the open door, it moved.

“…Who?”

A husky voice belonging to a frail girl. Hajime stared at the center of the room in surprise. The early “growing” was now moving. With the light finally piercing the darkness, the identity of it was exposed.

“Its…a human?”

The “growing” was a person. Only the face could be seen, every

other part was buried in the cube. Long blond hair hung down around the woman, like a ghost from a certain horror film. Pupils of red was peeping from the gaps of hair, just like a low-altitude moon. From her looks, she looked around 12-13 years old. The dangled hair looked haggard, but it still had a beautiful appearance.

Hajime unexpected stiffen, her red eyes was staring at him. Hajime took a deep breath and with a determined expression said:

“I’m sorry. I was wrong.”

Arifureta: Volume 2 Chapter 5

Cheater Rather Than a Hero

“I’m sorry. I was wrong.”

As he said it, Hajime tried to quietly close the door. The blond hair red eyes girl panicked and tried to stop him. Her voice that had not been used for years got blurred into a mutter; though her desperation was conveyed.

“W-Wait! Please! Save me…”

“Nope.”

Hajime said that and continued to close the door. Is a devil.

“W-Why? I will do anything.”

The girl was desperate. Only the head was seen, but her face was enough to transmit her feelings. Hajime responded in a gloomy manner.

“Hey, this is the bottom of the abyss. I cannot possibly release

someone that has been sealed in here. It would be absolutely dangerous. With the exception of the seal, nothing else is here… there isn't anything to help you escape. For that reason…"

His argument was sound. He wasn't a normal person that would respond to the pleading voice of a captured girl and release her without any hesitation. Original-gentle Hajime would have surely helped her.

Being so coldly refused, the desperate girl raised her voice as she was on the edge of tears.

"No! Cough…I'm not bad!…Wait! I'm"

Hajime kept closing the door unaltered. A little time before it was completely closed, Hajime started to grind his teeth. If he had had only closed it faster, he would have heard…

"I was just betrayed."

The closing door that only had a small crack, stopped when the girl's cry reached it. Only a little light got through the crack into the dark room. 10 second, then 20 seconds pass. Finally the door started to open again. Hajime stood at the doorway with a sour face like he had been bitten by 100 bugs and chewed up one.

He did not have any intention to help her. There must have been a suitable reason to be sealed in here. There was no evidence to

prove that there wasn't any danger. Being deceived by a wicked being was a highly likely possibility. It was appropriate to forsake her.

"I wonder what I'm doing."

Hajime sighed inwardly. His heart had shaken when she said "betrayed". The past should have been behind him. In this place, trying to fulfill his wish to "live" was extremely difficult. Grudges were unnecessary distraction. If her words could affect him this much, there was probably a part of him that had not moved on. Parts of Hajime's consciences probably still existed if he could sympathize with the girl that had the same circumstance as him.

Hajime scratched his head while he walked up to the girl. Of course, he wouldn't lower his guard.

"You said betrayed? I don't believe that is the reason you were sealed. If what you said was true, why did the betrayer seal you in here?"

The girl was stunned when Hajime came back. Through her abundant dirty blond hair, her red eyes stared at Hajime. Hajime got irritated with her lack of response. "Hey. Are you listening? If you are not going to talk, I'm leaving." As he said that he turned heel. Surprised, she gathered herself and begun telling the reason for her sealing.

"I'm an atavistic vampire…I was granted great power…because of it I worked hard for my country. But…one day…all my retainers…

told me I was not needed anymore. Uncle…became my king…I was fine with that…However, I was dangerous because of my powers… they couldn't kill me…so they sealed me…in here."

She talked desperately and bit by bit it became dried. Hajime groaned while he heard the story. Seems like the circumstances was full of drama. There were a few things that bothered her. He inquired as he suppressed his boiling emotions.

"You, what royal family are you from?"

"…(Hypnotized)"

"What do you mean can't be killed?"

"…Automatic regeneration. Injuries heal immediately. Even if decapitated."

"…T-That's amazing…is that your great power?"

"Not just that…Magic, direct manipulation…also don't need formation."

Hajime understood that. Magic manipulation came to him after he ate the demons. Incantations and magical formations were useless to him for strengthening his body. He did not need incantations for his transmutation or other skills. In Hajime's case, it did not

changed his dependence on hugh magical formations to use regular magic, because of his zero aptitude. His direct magic manipulation did not help in that regards and this made using regular magic for him impractical. If she had any magical aptitude, she could use some very powerful magic and she would be able of foul play. While other people would be preparing their chants and magical formations, she could just launch a spell at them without them expecting it. Honestly, it wouldn't be a contest. Also, immortality. It probably was not absolute, but it still was a cheat better than a hero.

"…Help me…"

While Hajime was thinking to himself, the girl pleaded with him.

"…"

Hajime motionlessly watched the girl, and she returned it. How long did they stare at each other…He sighed and scratched his head, and put his hand on the cube that sealed the girl.

"Ah."

The girl noticed the meaning and opened her eyes wide. Hajime ignored her reaction as he concentrated on his transmutation.

Crimson colored magic discharged from him. His magic had changed after he ate the demons. However, the cube was resisting

Hajime's transmutation. It was exactly like the bedrock at the top and bottom of a level. The cube was not completely immune to it. Little by little, Hajime's magic started to erode areas around the cube.

"Ku, resistance is strong…but, the present me!"

Hajime started to spend more magic. The equivalent to a six phrase incantation. Finally, the magic penetrated the cube's defense. As for the surroundings, it was bathed in crimson light of Hajime's magic.

Hajime needed more magic. He poured 7 phrase…8 phrase…The stone around her seal started to tremble.

"Still more!"

He fired himself up as he poured 9 phrase worth. If it was an attribute magic, it would already be a grand level spell. No, the amount of magic maybe was even more. The crimson light continued to rapidly grow brighter. Vampiress kept her eyes opened as she stared at the brightness and Hajime.

Sweat started to drip from his body, this was Hajime's first time using such a large-scale magic. If his control slipped for just a moment then his power would go on a rampage. Even with all this power the cube did not deform. Hajime was desperate; he had released all his magic.

Hajime did not understand why he would do all this are a girl he just met. He couldn't help it because he didn't want to leave her alone. Already, Hajime had decided to dedicate his life to eliminating all his enemies and getting home but…he asked himself "What are you doing" inwardly. He wanted to treat everything with a clear solution. He became serious.

His body started to emit a red light. Genuinely, he was going to release all his magic. All of his magic was poured into his transmuting to fulfill its goal!

The cube around the girl started to melt and little by little, she was getting being released from her shackles. Soon, more and more parts of her got free. Her swollen chest came to bare, then her waist, arms, and thighs. Under those cubes, she was wearing nothing. Even though her body was emaciated, she still had a mystique beauty to her. She dropped into a childish seat after all her body was set free. Her body seemed to lack the energy to stand up.

Hajime also sat down. His shoulders and breath huffed and puffed. A heavy sense of fatigue hit him when he felt his empty magical reserves. With his wild breath and shivering hands he reached for his "potion", but the girl clenched his hand. A hand that lacked any power; small and trembling. When Hajime glanced at her, she was staring at him. Her face was in an expressionless state, but her eyes told the real story.

With a small and trembling voice, she clearly said.

"…Thank you."

What sentiment was he to give to her thanks? Deep within his supposedly blackened heart, there was a small light that did not disappear.

Holding each others hands tightly. How much time passed? From Hajime's knowledge, vampires died out several hundreds of years ago. He remembered reading about it when he was studying the history of this world.

Even while she talked her expression did not change. In other words, she had long forgotten how to talk and express herself with other people. She had spent a long time in this darkness all by herself. Betrayed by the people she trusted. The girl did well in not going insane. Maybe it was because of her automatic regeneration. However, it could be considered a torture with it. Because it did not allow her to go mad, she had to experience everything and remember it.

Being able to drink the "potion", a wry smile showed on his face afterwards. He returned to grasping her weak hands. She responded back with her own grip.

"…What's your name?"

The girl asked Hajime with a whisper. Hajime finally noticed that they had not introduced themselves.

"Hajime. Nagumo Hajime. Yours?"

She muttered “Hajime” repeatedly. Like she was etching it into her mind as something important. To the asked question, she answered it with a question.

“…Name, grant me.”

“Eh? What do you mean grant you? Don’t tell me you forgot your name.”

Hajime asked her if it was because of the long imprisonment, but she just shakes her head.

“I don’t need my previous name anymore. The name Hajime grants me is good.”

“…Ha, even if you say that.”

Most likely she was dealing with the same thing as when Hajime changed. Throw away your previous self; live a new life with new values. Hajime was changed due to pain, hunger, and hatred. She wanted to change out of her own free will. The first step was to get a new name.

Her eyes was shining with anticipation. Hajime scratched his head while thinking there was no helping it. He told her the new name.

“How is “Yue”? I don’t really have a sense for naming, if you want a different one…”

“Yue?…Yue…Yue”

“Ah, I didn’t mean Yue [romanji]. From my hometown the name means “Moon”. When I first entered the room, I thought those eyes that shined through your blonde hair looked like the moon floating in the night…how is it?”

The girl was surprised by the response he gave and just blinked her eyes. As expected, her face remained expressionless but her eyes shined with joy.

“Yeah, from now on I’m Yue. Thank you.”

“Oh, for the time being…”

“!?”

Yue undid their clasped hands and looked at Hajime. He started to take off his overcoat and gave it to her.

“Wear this. You can’t stay naked forever.”

“…”

Yue reflexively took the offered overcoat while she looked at her state. She was really stark naked. All of her important parts were completely exposed. Hajime’s overcoat was quickly wrapped around her, while she turned bright red. Yue looked up at Hajime and murmured.

“Hajime’s a pervert.”

“…”

Hajime choose to stay silent, because saying anything would just make it worse. The overcoat was cheerfully put on by Yue. She was only 140 cm tall, so the overcoat was oversized for her. Her hands held the hems of the coat with a pleasant expression on her face.

During that moment, Hajime was drinking his “potion”. His vitality restored and his brain active again. Using “perception”…he froze. There was a sense of a terrible demon in the immediate area.

The location…right above!

When Hajime had noticed its presence, that was the moment it dropped from the ceiling. With every ounce of effort he picked up Yue and used “Flicker”. After executing his movement, he looked back at where he was. A thud came from the area he came from and saw what it was.

The monster's body was 5m in length. It had 4 huge-long-shear-like arms and 8 legs rustling around. A sharp needle was present on its two tails. Scorpions would be the best comparison to them. As for the two tails, it would be wise to assume it is poisonous. Hajime felt that compared to all the other demons he had faced so far, this one was clearly a strong warrior.

Sweat streamed down his forehead. When he had entered the room earlier, his full powered "Perception" did not pick up anything; now it was going crazy. This meant that this scorpion-like demon was released after he released Yue's seal. The last resort to prevent her escape. If he had left Yue by herself, he could most likely escape.

He set his glance to the girl in his arm. She was earnestly watching Hajime, and not minding the scorpion. Her eyes were like a calm water surface; resolving herself. The eyes that conveyed her feelings with eloquence. Yue had entrusted her fate to Hajime.

The moment their eyes met, the corners of his mouth rose, and his usual fearless smile came into being. Hajime, who did not care about others, felt sympathy for Yue. Light stilled remained in his mostly broken heart. For this betrayed girl, he would commit himself. If he couldn't reply to her pleas, he wasn't a man.

"Bring it on! Try to kill me if you can!"

Hajime quickly took his "potion" out from his pouch, he embraced her and fed some of it to Yue; who was perched on his shoulders.

“Umu!”

The sacred water flowed into her body from the test tube-shaped container. Her eyes watered at being force fed an alien substance, but was surprised when her vitality was being restored.

Hajime moved Yue from his shoulder to his back with his hand. Her feet were still weak, but it would recover soon. He did not want to fight while having to protect her.

“Hold on tight! Yue!”

Her body was far from recovered, but she used the power that returned to hold on tight to Hajime’s body with her limbs.

The scorpion started to make noise as it advanced towards them. Feeling Yue’s grip on his back, he declared with his bold smile.

“If you’re going to get in my way…I’m going to kill then devour you!”

Arifureta: Volume 2 Chapter 6

Demon of the Sealed Room

A purple liquid jetted from the needle on the scorpion's tail. Hajime jumped aside at once. The floor started to dissolve when the purple liquid splashed onto it. Seemed it was an acid.

After he looked around and confirmed his surroundings, Hajime discharged Donner.

Dopan! (Bang)

Donner was shot with maximum power. A bullet going 3.9km per second smashed into the scorpion's head and exploded. The passenger on his back was shocked. She had never seen such a weapon; a weapon that could attack at a flash. There wasn't even any sign of magic. Some static could be felt around his right hand but there was no incantation or magic formula. Yue noticed that Hajime was the same as her. He was able to directly manipulate magic. The same as her and somehow he was in this abyss. She wasn't sure if that was the case, but she had tuned out the scorpion and Hajime.

Hajime was continuously moving around with his "Air Walk". On his face was a grim expression he never had before. Using his "Perception" and "Magic Perception", he noticed the scorpion wasn't moving.

To prove to him, the needle on one of the tail aimed towards Hajime. The tail enlarged for just an instant and the needle was shot with a tremendous speed. When Hajime was about to dodge, the needle exploded in mid air and turned into a buckshot.

“Ku!”

Hajime groaned out while he emptied Donner, swept with his “Grand Kick” and chopped with his “Air Claws”. Even with the pressure he was able to get a shot off from Donner. He threw Donner into the air after firing it and hurled a grenade from his pouch.

Once again, the scorpion endured the shot from Donner. It was preparing to unleash its acid and buckshot again. Before it was ready, a grenade approximately 8 cm in diameter rolled near it and popped. The grenade scattered burning tar onto the scorpion.

Hajime called it an “incendiary grenade”. The reagent used to cause the scorching was the Fulham ore Hajime had found on the tar level. With its ability to burn at 3000 degree celsius and its easy ignition, it was the perfect choice.

The “incendiary grenade” was almost extinguished as it had burned through the tar. Smokes were coming off the scorpion and it appeared to be damaged, but it had also made it angry.

“Kishaaaa!!”

Using its 8 legs, it rushed forwards fiercely while it screamed. The four arms it possessed elongated like a cannon shot and sped towards Hajime.One of the arms he shook off with “Flicker” and another he leapt away from using “Air Walk”. The third arm was smacked away with “Grand Kick, his posture was thrown off balance and the fourth arm was about to hit him. Donner was suddenly shot, and using the force from the shot he was able to twist his body to dodge the attack. All those move put a lot of pressure on Yue, but she was able to tolerate it and held on.

While in the air, he leapt onto the scorpion’s back. Hajime was able to balance himself on the raging scorpions back and fired his Donner at point-blank.

Zugan!

A terrible explosive sound ripped through the area, and the monster that had taken that explosive attack slammed into the ground. However, only the crust was scratched and no real damage was done to it. Grinding his teeth, he prepared his “Air Claws” with Donner. When his ability clashed with the scorpion’s armor it only made a clink; no damage was seen on it.

Fed up, the scorpion aimed its tail and shot its needle.

Hajime immediately jumped aside with a twist. He fired at the point where the needle was launched. The bullet hit its target at the tail and caused the tail to flick, but still there was no damage because of the outer shell. He was lacking offensive power.

The beast's four arms started to attack the aerial Hajime like a storm. In desperation, Hajime quickly leap backwards as he threw an "incendiary grenade" at the scorpion's back. Once again the tar scattered over the scorpion, but this was only going to work as a delay.

When he was thinking about what to do at this point, an unprecedented scream came from the scorpion.

"Kyiiii!!"

Chills ran through his body and immediately he tried to retreat with "Flicker"; it was too late. The surrounding terrain started to waver and countless splinters ejected from the ground.

"Damnit!"

This was a complete surprise. Hajime was going to desperately escape into the air, but he twisted his body to protect Yue from an approaching splinter. This action caused his balance to be broken. He was able to dodge using Donner and "Grand Kick". When he was dodging at the edge of his vision he saw the scorpion preparing its acid and buck shot.

Hajime's face drew stiff. With its preparation done, the scorpion fired its attacks. He steeled himself. In this situation, dodging both of them was impossible. Hajime clenched his teeth. Using "Air Walk", he was able to dodge the acid. Quickly after he started to

protect his body. His left arm went to his heart and his right arm to his face. Hajime used his magic to strengthen his body to the limit. Then dozens of needles pierced into this body.

“Gaaa!!”

Any fatals injury were avoided while he screamed. Since Yue was on his back, he decided to take the needles and stop them with his body. Hajime was blown away from the impact, and rolled onto the ground; while intense pain wrecked his body. Yue was flung away from his back by the shock.

While dozens of needles were pieced into his body, Hajime took out a “flash grenade’ and lobbed it towards the scorpion. The grenade drew a parabola, and flashed right in front of the scorpion’s eyes.

“Kyishaaa!!”

Blinded by the sudden flash of light, the scorpion instinctively stepped back. It had been tracking Hajime’s movement from the beginning. The beast had judged which step to take and it didn’t make a mistake.

Hajime pulled out the needles stabbing his body and consumed the “potion” pill near his molar.

“Guu!”

A groan leaks between his gritted teeth. Hajime looked for Yue while pulling his needles, but Yue found him first and came towards him.

“Hajime!”

Yue ran up to Hajime anxiously. Her expressionless was gone; she was ready to burst into tears.

“I’m fine. His armor is too hard. I can’t think of a strategy…his four arms also cover his mouth and eyes…kamikaze?”

Despite Yue’s worries, Hajime continued to mull over the scorpion. Looking at Hajime, she started to cry.

“…Why?”

“Ah?”

“Why don’t you just run?”

If he left her, he might escape. Yue brung up the topic because she knew it was possible. However, Hajime had an amazing gaze.

“What are you saying now? Just because a slightly strong enemy showed up, don’t give up.”

In order to survive, Hajime was willing to do anything: bluffing, lying, surprise attacks, foul play, and whatever is needed to win. His fight with the bear was the only exception, he basically thought you could take “fair play” and shove it up your ass. This was not the place for such a naive thought. There is not guilt here. You have to live this way.

But he wasn’t going to allow himself to become heartless. He still knew right from wrong, humanity and justice. The reason he remember these and regained them was because of Yue. That was why, he had no choice but to save her. She had entrusted herself to him. The moment he accepted that he could not become heartless.

Yue nodded at him as she understood more than what he said, and she embraced him.

“H-Hey, what’s wrong?”

This situation is not time for such a thing, what is she doing? The scorpion was going to recover soon. His wounds had healed. Preparations were needed to get him combat ready. Yue didn’t care about that and placed her hand on his neck.

“Hajime, please believe.”

Yue kissed Hajime's nape after she said that.

"Tsu!?"

No, not a kiss. He was bit. Hajime felt pain at his neck. There was a discomforting feeling as he felt power being extracted from him. At that feeling, he tried to shake free, but he remember that Yue introduced herself as a vampire. She was sucking his blood. Saying "please believe" while said vampire sucked your blood was scary, even if he did not like it he couldn't just run away and complain about it.

Hajime just gave a wry smile and supported Yue by embracing her. For a moment, Yue trembled but soon she buried her face into his nape and hugged back more tightly. Maybe it was just his imagination but he thought she was delighted.

"Kyishaa!!"

The roar of the scorpion echoed. It had recovered from the "flash grenade". Ground waves formed again; it seemed to know where they were. Probably this was its Special Magic, the ability to manipulate surrounding terrain.

"But that's my forte."

Hajime put his right hand on the ground and transmuted. A stone wall 3 m tall formed around Yue and Hajime.

The conical splinters struck at Hajime from all around but his defensive wall stopped them. Each time the splinters hit the wall was broken, but soon Hajime would make a new wall to replace it. As far as scale and strength, the scorpion was better than Hajime. However, Hajime was faster than the scorpion. It seemed that 3m was the limit of his range, the thorns were not able to fly, so it acted as Hajime's defense.

Hajime was concentrating on defending with his transmutation, and Yue finally released her mouth from his neck. She licked her lips with a delirious expression. He felt fascinated though she had a childish figure. Her skin that was previously haggard completely disappeared and now her skin was glossy like white porcelain. Colored returned to her cheeks, and it looked dreamy rose red. Crimson eyes emitted a warm light. Her thin-small hands caressed Hajime's cheeks.

"…Gochisousama."

She slowly rose her hand towards the scorpion.

One word was muttered.

""Azure Sky""

A pillar of bluish-white flame 6-7 m in diameter formed overhead of the scorpion.

Just from being around it the scorpion screamed as it was being burned and retreated. However, this Vampire Princess of the Abyss wouldn't allow it. A beautiful finger extended gracefully like a baton. The pillar of flame carried out its conductor's instruction without fail. It pursued the escaping scorpion then…a direct hit.

"Gu-ugyiyiaaaa!"

A never heard before scream escaped from the scorpion. Agony filled the scream. The pillar exploded into a flash of light and everything was blinded by it. Hajime just looked at the sublime magic in utter amazement while he protected his eyes with his arms.

Soon, the flames disappeared and the magic was finished. There in the center was the figure of the scorpion in an anguish pose with its outer shell melted from the flames. The outer shell that didn't even melt at 3000 degree celsius, the same shell that didn't crack when fired upon by a rail gun. Should he praised Yue, who had defeated such a monster so easily? Or should he praise the durability of the scorpion who took such an attack and was still intact? He was in a dilemma.

Hajime heard a sound that pulled him away from the astounding sight. Yue was sitting down while breathing heavily. She seemed to have depleted her magic reserve.

"Yue, are you alright?"

“…Superlative…Tiring.”

“Haha, you could do it! You saved us. I’ll take care of the rest. Take a break.”

“Go for it.”

Hajime shook his hand and used “Flicker” to shorten the distance. The scorpion was still alive. While the outer shell was melted, it roared with anger, and aimed a buckshot at the approaching Hajime.

A “flash grenade” was quickly thrown by Hajime. He fired a shot from Donner before the needle could be fired. The “flash grenade” is shot through by the bullet, which wasn’t accelerated by electromagnetism, and exploded. Familiar with the experience, the scorpion gloomily searched for Hajime in the area painted with light.

No matter how much it look, it couldn’t find Hajime. The scorpion was perplexed at losing Hajime’s sign. Then Hajime landed on its back.

“Kishua?”

An astonished voice raised out of the scorpion. It was wondering how a sign that disappear suddenly appear on its back. When the “flash grenade” went off, Hajime had used his “Hide Presence” to

cut off his sign and arrive at the scorpion's back.

Hajime was burnt a little as the outer shell of the scorpion was still red hot. He didn't care about that. Donner was pressed against any thin area on the shell and emptied its chambers. The armor's original durability had already been lost. In response to the zero distance shooting from a railgun, that absolute shield crumbled.

The scorpion lashed out its two tails without any care if it hit itself, but Hajime moved faster than it.

"I'll still eat you."

Hajime took out grenades from his pouch and forced them down the holes he had created with Donner. Sticking his arm into these holes he left the beast a party gift. Doing this caused his arm to be burnt but he didn't care.

Before he could be attacked by the scorpion, he evacuated with "Flicker". The scorpion turned towards Hajime to attack again.

However, its time was up.

Goba!

A muffled sound of an explosion coursed through the area and at the same time the scorpion trembled. Hajime and scorpion was

facing each without each moving, and the silence between them continued.

Slowly, the scorpion started to slope. It flopped onto the ground with a thud.

Hajime approached the unmoving scorpion. He placed Donner into the beast mouth and fire it 3 times to make sure;when he was satisfied he nodded to himself. For sure its dead. This is the policy he came up with these days.

Looking back, there was Yue sitting there staring at Hajime with an expressionless face but her eyes was somehow joyful. He did not know when his journey through the dungeon will end, but he seemed to have acquired a reliable partner.

Pandora's box was said to have contained disaster and a handful of hope. Apparently, this metaphor he made before he entered the room, had hit the mark. Hajime walked to Yue while he thought of this.

Arifureta: Volume 2 Chapter 7

Chat at Ease

Hajime had brought back materials and meat from the scorpion and cyclops back to his base. He was struggling with the bulk. When the exhausted Yue got to taste blood again, she revived in a flash and her body displayed a splendid strengthening as she got back her superhuman strength. The two were able to bring the items back.

They could have used the sealed room, but when it was proposed Yue adamantly refused. No wonder. It was natural to hate the place you were sealed up into for so long. When he replenished his supplies they would not be able to move, so the sooner they left the better for her mental health. At the moment, they were talking each other while they resupplied.

“So…in conclusion Yue is at least 300 years old?”

“…Breach of etiquette.”

Yue watched Hajime with reproachful eyes full of criticism. A talk of age seems to be a taboo for any woman in any world.

From his memories, Hajime remembered that the vampire tribe perished after a massive war 300 year ago. Yue probably did not

know her real age because there was no sense of time in the dark room. It wouldn't be surprising if she didn't know how much time has passed because of the sealing. She was sealed when she was 20 years old, this would make her a little over 300 years old.

"Do all vampires live long?"

"I'm special. "Regeneration" prevent my aging."

At the age of 12, her direct magic manipulation and "Auto Regeneration" woke up and stopped her aging. Because common vampire tribes consumed blood, they lived longer than other races. Still 200 years was the limit. Humans lived on average for about 70 years. Devils around 120 years. For demi-humans it depended on the tribe. Elves could live for several hundred years.

Yue was considered one of the strongest in only a few years after she awoke her atavistic powers. At age 17 she suited to the throne. The magic that had melted the scorpion's shell was shot in no time. She also had an almost immortal body. To the point she would be called "God" or "Monster". Yue said that it was the latter. Her uncle who was blinded with greed, spread rumors around to view her as a monster. They tried to kill her for a "just" cause, but her "Auto Regen" didn't allow her to die. That was when they choose to seal her instead. She was shocked with the sudden betrayal. Too confused, she did not resist and they placed the seals on her. She regained herself when she was in the sealed room. That is why she did not know about the sealing method, scorpion, or location of her sealing. Hajime thought he found someway home. He was disappointed.

They talked how Yue's powers. She seemed to have an aptitude to

all the attributes. Hajime was amazed with her cheat, but she mentioned she was weak in close combat. All she could by herself is run around with her strengthened body while she rapidly fired off spells. Because she had such power magic, it wasn't that big of a handicap.

She was able to use magic without any incantation, but she mentioned the names from habit. There were a lot of people that used speech and behavior to clarify the image needed to supplement their magic. Yue was not an exception.

Her "Auto Regen" can be classified as a Special Magic. If her magic remained, she would not die unless they could disintegrate her into dust in an instant. Conversely, any injuries she suffered while her magic was depleted could not be healed. Her magic had been drained after all those years of being sealed. Yue would have died if the scorpion had hit her.

"So…it is a crucial discussion, do you know anything about this place? Any escape routes to the ground."

"…I don't know. But…"

She also seemed to not know anything about this labyrinth. While apologetic, she continued her story with what she knew.

"…It is said that one of the traitors made this labyrinth."

“Traitors?”

Hajime stopped his transmutation work at the unaccustomed word, and glanced at Yue. She was watching him work and when he stopped she looked up at him. He nodded to her to continue with her story.

“Traitors…they were the followers of God that challenged him in ancient times…they created it to destroy the world.”

Since Yue was an expressionless girl who didn’t talk much, her explanations took time. Hajime still needed more time to resupply. He realized he needed to develop new weapons to combat his weak offensive ability that was evident in the fight against the scorpion. While working carefully, he was poised to listen to her.

Yue continued with her story. 8 of them existed. 8 of them rebelled against God to destroy the world. However, when they failed they fled to the ends of the world. The places they fled to were the current 8 Great Dungeons. One of them was “Orcus Dungeon”, the current Dungeon they were in. It is said that in the deepest part of the abyss was where one of the traitor lived.

“…If it is there, there will be a road out…”

“I see. I did not think that this abyss was created with such great effort. If it is a magician from the age of gods, it wouldn’t be surprising that they had some transportation magic to lead them out.”

Hajime loosen his cheeks when the possibility was present. He returned his eyes back to his hand and continued his work. Yue's eyes returned to his hand too, and stared.

"…Is it that interesting?"

Yue just nodded at that question. The image of her wearing that oversized coat and having her small hands hold her knees was charming. Her unbelievably well-featured appearance combined with her cuddle-ability made her really cute.

(But she is 300 years old. As expected of another world. Loli-baba is real…)

Even if his personality had changed, he still had his Otaku knowledge. As he unintentionally thought that unpleasant thought, Yue reacted to it.

"…Hajime, you just thought of something strange."

"Nope, nothing."

Pretending ignorance was too late, he started to sweat because of her sharp woman intuition. He tried to deceive her by working quietly. Yue left that when she wanted to ask a question.

“Hajime, why are you here?”

It was a natural question. Here in this abyss. Unless you were a demon, this wasn’t a place to live in. Yue wanted to ask about so much. Why can he manipulate magic directly? Why can he use magic that are like Special Magic? How can he eat demon flesh and be okay? What happened to his left arm? Is he human? What weapon is he using?

Bit by bit, Hajime answered the questions dutifully. He might have been craving for a conversation after all this time alone. The conversation went on and Hajime did not even look troubled at her questions. Yue was probably someone Hajime wanted to be sweet on. Maybe she was the last resort to prevent his complete fall into heartlessness. He felt that about her unconsciously.

Hajime started with when his class was summoned to this world. How he was called incompetent by everyone. Next was his battle with the Behemoth and the betrayal of his classmate that caused him to fall into this abyss. Eating various types and amounts of demons. The desire to fight the bear. What the potion could do. He talked about how he developed the weapons by basing them on weapons he seen at his homeworld. Sniffles could be heard from Yue gradually. What? When he looked at her, she was weeping. Startled, Hajime instinctively reached out and wiped off her tears.

“What happened suddenly?”

“…Kusu…Hajime…painful…just like me…”

Apparently, she was crying for Hajime. He started to stroke her head with a bitter smile after he got over his shock.

“Forget about it. The business with my classmate is inconsequential. Don’t worry about the small stuff. After getting my revenge, then what would I do? Rather than that, I want to put all my energy in surviving and finding a way home.”

While a snort sounded, Yue who looked like a pleased cat at the caressing Hajime was doing, she reacted to his words of returning home.

“…Going home?”

“Yeah? To my original world? Of course. I want to return…I changed a lot but…home…I want to return home.”

“…I see.”

Yue looked down with a sunken expression. Then muttered to herself.

“…I don’t have a place…to return…”

“…”

Hajime started to scratch his head with his retracted hand that was brushing Yue's head. He wasn't that dense. Yue was looking for a new place to belong, is what he felt. That was the reason she wanted a new name. If Hajime left this world, Yue would be alone again.

Hajime thought to himself: "Even after I decided to only reach my goals, I guess I'm still soft," while he stroke Yue's head.

"If thats so, want to come with me?"

"Eh?"

Yue opened her eyes wide in surprise at Hajime's words. He couldn't came down after he saw the red eyes wet with tears. This caused him to speak rapidly.

"No, I mean, to my homeworld. A world with only average humans, though it would be tight without a family registration… also with my state. I'm not sure what will happen…but if Yue wishes for it."

Yue was stunned for a while, but eventually her mind caught up. She timidly asked "is that okay?" Her eyes couldn't hide the expectations dwelling in them. The eyes were sparkling and Hajime nodded. Like until now her expressionless was a lie, a smile bloomed on her face. Hajime was mesmerized. When he noticed himself he panicked and shook his head.

Unable to look at Yue, Hajime devoted himself to his work. Yue took great interest in his work. The amount of distance between them shortened. Hajime persuaded himself to not mind it.

"…What is this?"

Little by little Hajime was finishing different parts with transmutation. On the side there was a 1 m long cylindrical pipe, a red bullet about 12 cm in length, and others parts scattered around.

This was the weapon Hajime started to develop as his new trump card, since Donner was lacking in necessary power.

"This is…An Anti-matter rifle: Railgun version. You saw my gun, right? This is a more powerful version. The bullet is specially made."

When all the parts were assembled, the rifle's full length was 1 m 50 cm. Hajime was considering what he could do to increase the firepower of his guns. Electromagnetic acceleration and combustion charge was the limit for Donner. Donner couldn't be improved by much anymore because of its design. So he had to make a new gun.

Naturally the answer to increase the power was a bigger caliber, and also lengthen the barrel for acceleration. He arrived at an Anti-matter rifle. It could only load one shot but its theoretical power is enormous. Donner already has a destructive power 10 times of that a regular gun. A monster gun that would crush a normal persons

body if they shot it.

The gun's name: Schlagen. In theory, it was 10 times more powerful than Donner…theoretically. Scorpion shell was the material used to make it. When he had analyzed the shell with "Mineral Appraisal" it said this…

Stall Ore
High magic affinity. A special ore where its hardness is increased by the amount of magic power used.

This ore was probably how the scorpion had such a hard shell. It probably had an enormous reserve of magic to fuel his armor.

If it was ore, then Hajime could process it. When he tested his transmutation on it was simple. With his transmutation it was possible to breakthrough it. He remembered how hard it was to deal with when he fought the beast.

Hajime had his hands on a lot of good materials to work with, so he guess it worked out. Using these materials he started his development of Schlagen's barrel. Since he had become a lot more skilled than when he made Donner, the work progressed smoothly.

He obsessed over the bullet. The bullet that was made out of Tauru ore was coated with Stall ore. It could be called a full metal jacket-like. In each cartridge a suitable amount of ratio and compression of combustion powder was installed. In one stretch, with [Replica Transmutation], he was able to mass-produce the bullets with ease.

Hajime talked with Yue while he carefully worked, then Schlagen was finished. The gun had a very powerful and brutal form. He was satisfied with himself and the gun. After he finished the gun, he noticed that he was hungry now. They decided to have grilled scorpion and cyclops meat for a meal.

“Yue, meals ready…is it bad? Would eating this meat cause any pain…are vampires fine with it?”

Demon meat had become the daily meal. Hajime invited Yue to eat with him, but was wondering if it was alright for her to eat it.

Yue shook her head to say: “I don’t need the meal” to Hajime.

“Well you have been sealed for 300 years without eating and lived…Don’t you feel hungry?”

“I feel it…but I’m okay.”

“Fine? Did you eat something?”

Hajime looked at her belly with a questioning gaze. Yue pointed to Hajime.

“Hajime’s blood.”

“Ah, my blood. That would mean that a vampire’s whole meal is blood?”

“…We can also eat…but drinking blood is more effective.”

Seems that as long as they drank some blood, vampires were okay with it. She had sucked Hajime blood earlier and was satisfied. When he was convinced with the answer he looked at Yue. For some reason Yue was licking her lips.

“…Why are you licking your lips?”

“…Hajime…delicious…”

“D-Delicious you say. I thought that I would taste bad considering I’ve eaten so much demon flesh.”

“…Mature taste…”

“…”

From Yue description, his blood had a heavy, deep taste similar to a soup. His soup was a dense one filled with many kinds of vegetables and meat. The first time he had his blood sucked, she fell into a trance. This wasn’t his imagination. Any dish would be

the finest after starving for so long.

Hajime wanted to stop her bewitching lip licking. He realized Yue was older. However, that did not calm him when he saw that childish figure displaying such an immoral act, such a supreme combination.

“…Delicacy.”

“…Please pardon me.”

His partner might be a little dangerous in many ways. Hajime broke out a cold sweat.

* * *

Name	Hajime		
Age	17 Years Old		
Gender	Male		
Class	Transmutation Artist (Synergist)		
Level	1		
Strength	300		
Vitality	280		
Agility	280		
Intelligence	980		
Dexterity	280		
Magic Resistance	980		
Skills			

- Transmutation
  - Mineral Appraisal
  - Precision Transmutation
  - Mineral Enquiry
  - Mineral Separation
  - Mineral Fusion

- Replica Transmutation

- Magic Manipulation
  - Magic Emission
  - Magic Compression
- Iron Stomach
- Lightning Clad
- Divine Step
  - Air Walk
  - Flicker
  - Grand Legs
- Air Claws
- Night Vision
- Far Vision
- Perception
- Magic Perception
- Hide Presence
- Poison Resist
- Paralysis Resist
- Petrification Resistance
- Varja
- Magic Penetration
- Language Comprehension

Omake (No relations to the main story)

"…Tsk."

"K-Kaori? You clicked your tongue…"

“Eh? What’s the matter Shizuku-chan?”

“N-No. Nothing…”

“…Thieving Cat.”

“Kaori!?”

“Fufu, its all right, Shizuku-chan. I felt like someone was threatening my position.”

Arifureta: Volume 2 Chapter 8

Second Nightmare (Classmate Side 2 Part I)

The day when Hajime met Yue and had their desperate struggle with the scorpion.

Kouki's group, the Hero party has once again came to "Orcus Dungeon". The party was just Kouki's group, and a small rogue group. The group of 5 boys and girls were lead by Nagayama Jugo, a big judo guy.

The reason was simple. Even if they did not talk about it, Hajime's death had cast a shadow over their hearts. They strongly felt his "Death in Battle", and this made them unable to directly fight. Trauma had struck them.

Of course, they did not concern the Church with this. If they could experience actual combat again, then it is likely they would be able to fight again. Everyday they urged themselves to return their past selves. However, Aiko-sensei protested what they were doing.

Aiko did not participate in the expedition. Her class was the rare and special "Farmer", during training, the church wanted her to get involved with the agricultural development. If it was Aiko-sensei, she would be able to solve their food issues.

She had fallen asleep in her bed after she got the news of Hajime's death. While she stayed in the safety of the city, her student had died. They would not be able to return to Japan with everyone. For Aiko-sensei who had such a strong sense of responsibility, it was shocking.

Therefore, she wasn't going to allow her students into the battlefield anymore. With her class, she would be able to change this world's whole food issue. That Aiko-sensei was protesting the training the students were getting with indomitable resolve. Not wanting to worsen their relationship, the church gave into her protests.

As a result, there were rogues who trained themselves. The only one to continue their training was Jugo's party. Because they wanted to challenge "Orcus Dungeon" again. This time Meld and several member of the knights attended.

This was the 6th day of their journey into the dungeon. They were currently at the 60th level. Just 5 levels behind the highest recorded achievement. However, Kouki's group was stuck. No, rather than not being able to advance, they kept getting nightmares of what happened on that day.

Although it was a different cliff than the one that day, it still had a similar feel to it. They had to pass a suspension bridge that hung on the cliff to advance into the next level. There was no problem per se, but they still remembered. In particular, Kaori, did not move while she started into the darkness of the abyss.

"Kaori…"

The worried call came from Shizuku. Kaori shook her head slowly as had her strong gaze at the view, and gave Shizuku a smile.

“I’m all right, Shizuku-chan.”

“I see…Please don’t overdo it. No need to be reserved with me.”

“Ehehe, thanks. Shizuku-chan.”

Shizuku gave a best friend a smile. Kaori’s eyes gave off a strong glow. There were no despair or escapism in those eyes. The insightful Shizuku that were sensitive to the subtleties of human, knew Kaori was telling the truth.

(For sure, Kaori is strong.)

Hajime’s death was almost a certainty. It was lukewarm to saw he survived. However, it wasn’t denial or escapism. Kaori was convincing herself to press forward, and Shizuku felt proud of her best friend.

However, the person with the hero-like quality couldn’t read the mood. Kouki thought that Kaori was lamenting over Hajime’s death as she stared into the bottom of the abyss. He concluded that the gentle Kaori was suffering from the death of a classmate. His beliefs were filtering his thoughts, and he believed the smiling

Kaori was forcing herself.

Kaori thought Hajime was special. Kouki had not even for a bit believed that there was a chance for survival. He tried to offer comforting words to Kaori.

“Kaori…I like your kindness. But you can’t always be caught up in your classmate’s death. You have to move forward. For sure, that is what Nagumo-kun would want.”

“Wait, Kouki…”

“Be silent Shizuku! Even if I’m severe, don’t try to stop me just because you’re a childhood friend…Kaori, its alright. I’m by your side. I won’t die. I won’t let anyone else die. I promise not to make Kaori sad anymore.”

“Haaa…as usual so reckless…Kaori…”

“Haha, it’s all right, Shizuku-chan…I understand what Kouki-kun is trying to say. Its fine.”

“I see, you understand!”

Kaori couldn’t help but smile wryly at Kouki’s misunderstanding. Even if she told him what she truly felt, it wouldn’t get through to him. Hajime had already died in Kouki’s mind. He wouldn’t be able

to understand that the reason she was training so hard and taking this expedition into the dungeon, was because she believed Hajime survived. Kouki's nature was to not doubt what he believed in. The boy would just take Kaori's feelings as denial of reality. They had known each other for a long time, so Kaori was familiar with how Kouki operated. That is why both of them remained quiet.

He thought those words were the only way to completely persuade her, he had no ulterior motive in those words. Kaori and Shizuku was used to his behavior, but other girls would have fallen for him with his sweet mask and atmosphere.

Normally, an Ikemen with such a good personality and skills would have his girl childhood friend admire him. Shizuku had been in the adult dojo since she was small, because of her strict father, and with her insight she knew that Kouki's sense of justice could be a shortcoming. So, any more feelings than a childhood friend was not born in her. The other party was the same.

Shizuku had often told Kaori that was dense when it came to love, so Kouki's behavior had no effect on hier. He was a good person and an important childhood friend, but there were no romantic feelings.

"Kaori-chan, I'll cheer you on. If you need anything just ask me."

"That's right, Suzu is always Kaori's ally."

On the side they had heard Kouki's conversation. Taniguchi Suzu and Nakamura Eri had joined the conversation. After they entered

high school, these two had become close friends with Kaori. They had joined the party lead by Kouki.

Nakamura Eri is a beautiful women with black hair that is styled into a natural bob, and wore glasses. She had a gentle character and usually she was the person that was in the back that watched everything quietly. Eri loved books. The girl gave off a feeling like she was in the typical book committee, and truthfully she was in the committee.

Taniguchi Suzu was a small girl at 142 cm tall. She was a bundle of energy, that got people wondering where all that energy came from her small body. Suzu always was joyful and hopping around. With her heartwarming figure, she was the class mascot.

They understood what Kaori felt on that day Hajime disappeared, so they supported her decision.

“Yeah, Eri-chan, Suzu-chan, Thank you.”

Kaori smiled at the two close friends she made in high school.

“Oh~…Kaorin is brave~, Nagumo-kun! To make Suzu and Kaori-chan this sad! If you aren’t alive, Suzu will kill you!”

“S-Suzu? I don’t think you can kill him if he isn’t alive.”

“Don’t worry about the details. If he is dead, we can just use Eririn’s necromancy for Kaorin.”

“S-Suzu, you have no delicacy. Kaori-chan believes Nagumo-kun is alive. Also, my necromancy…”

Suzu runs wild and Eri admonishes. That’s their normal behavior. Kaori and Shizuku showed a joyful expression at the two’s spectacle. Even though Kouki wasn’t that far, he didn’t hear the conversation. Naturally, Kouki was equipped with a hearing loss skill that always activates when there were important conversation or words.

“Eri-chan, I don’t mind it.”

“Suzu that’s enough. Eri is troubled.”

Suzu puffed her cheeks when Kaori and Shizuku laughed as they said those words. Eri was relieved when Kaori didn’t take Suzu’s words seriously. Her face blenched at the mention of “Necromancy”.

“Eri-chan, necromancy is no good? Such a special class…”

“…Yeah, sorry. If I was able to use it properly, it would be such great help…”

“Eri, anyone have strong and weak points. You have such a high aptitude to magic, so don’t worry about it.”

“That’s so, Eri-chan. Even if its your class, there are preferences and fields of talent. Your precise and accurate magic is helpful for us.”

“Yeah, I’ll overcome if I try my best. I want to help everyone more.”

Eri grasps her small hands into a fist to express her determination. Suzu hopped around saying: “That’s the spirit, Eririn!” in this situation. Shizuku and Kaori smiled at their friend’s perseverance.

Eri’s class was “Necromancer”. Dark magic is used that is associated with the spirits and consciousness. This kind of magic was able to cast bad status (debuffs) in battle. Necromancy is a super-high difficulty magic in Dark magic; it acted upon the residual thoughts of the dead. There were a few priest in the Church that practiced it. The priest drew up the residual thoughts of the dead and conveyed them to their bereaved family.

However, that was not the true essence of this magic. The real power of this magic was the ability to give these residual thoughts of the dead a corpse to work with and controlling them like puppets. Although the revived dead will display deteriorated level of skill from their time alive. Also, there were ways to control or possess living humans too.

These puppets only respond to a certain extent. They also are very

inanimate and pale, like a ghost. In addition, she felt ethically wrong in using dead people like this. Eri choose not to delve into this part of the arts.

With the figure of those 4 girls, there was someone staring at Kaori from the rear with dark eyes. It was Hiyama Daisuke. When they came back to the kingdom and the students calmed down, there was severe blame waiting for Hiyama for what he did [Setting off Trap].

Hiyama had expected this and apologized with Dogeza. He knew that arguing or trying anything else wasn't going to help. The timing and place to apologize was important.

The perfect time came when he was able to apologize to Kouki in front of everyone. He knew that if he apologized to Kouki, the guy would accept it and try to mediate with the class. His plan paid off, the criticism aimed at Hiyama was dissolved by Kouki. Kaori was originally kind, so she didn't particularly blame the apologizing Hiyama that was in tears. Just as he planned. However, Shizuku had noticed the underlying motive Hiyama had. She was disgusted with how he used her childhood friends.

Moreover, he was following the orders of the person. It was a terrible and horrifying order. Hiyama wanted to avoid it, but he had crossed the line. He couldn't stop now. However, Hiyama held a sense of delight and awe for the person that drew up this terrible plan. While that person was so natural and blended with the class.

(That guy is crazy…but Kaori will be mine…)

Kaori could be obtained if he just listened to that guy. Hiyama smiled instinctively at those dark thoughts.

“Oi, Daisuke? What’s wrong?”

Kondo, Nakamura, and Saito were sending dubious looks at Hiyama’s state. These three was still together with Hiyama. Birds of a feather flock together for these 4. Hiyama was awkward for a moment, but soon his regained his friendly attitude. But if that friendship was true was a delicate matter.

“N-no, its nothing. I’m just happy that we got past 60 levels.”

“Oh, for certain. Just 5 more and we will beat the record～”

“We are like, getting stronger too. That group that stayed behind has no guts.”

“Well, don’t say that. Because we are special.”

These three did not seem to question Hiyama deception. People who kept fighting while thinking they were special and got arrogant were the villains of villains. They had a huge attitude compared to the group left behind at the Royal Palace. Complaints were thrown about in a haughty manner. However, they did have the ability to break through the 60 levels, so they couldn’t be stopped from their attitude.

Unlike them with their boisterous attitude, Kouki's side was quiet. Accessory seems to be the guiding principle.

Without much trouble, the group was at the highest attained level of 65.

"Brace yourself! The map of this area is incomplete. We won't know what will happen."

Meld's voice sounded. Kouki's group tightened their expression and stepped into the unknown domain.

A big hall appeared after they had advanced for a while. All the members had a bad feeling somehow. That feeling proved to be true. Magic appeared in the center of the room as soon as they entered it. A 10 m magic formation pulsed with dark red energy. That was a familiar sight for them.

"N-No way…is it that guy?"

Kouki cried out while a cold sweat dripped down his forehead. The other members also had a strained expression on them.

"Seriously, that guy didn't die?"

Ryutaro shouts while surprised. Meld responded to them with a calm voice and a stern expression.

“The origin of the demons in the dungeon is unknown. Even if you defeat it once, you will encounter it many times. Be careful! Do not forget to secure an escape route!”

So they can escape for sure if there was an emergency, Meld first priority was to issue commands to ensure an escape route. The subordinates obeyed immediately. But Kouki wanted to speak his mind.

“Meld. We are not the same as that time. I’ve become many times stronger. And won’t be defeated again! Certainly we can win!”

“He, that’s true. We won’t always lose. This is a revenge match.”

Ryutaro shouted out with a fearless smile. Meld just shrugged his shoulder like he couldn’t help it. With their current abilities they should be okay. Similarly, he now had that same smile.

The magic formation finally lights up and explodes. Their nightmare had appeared before them.

“Guugaaa!!”

The beast gave a roar and stomped the ground. A glare full of

fierce intent to kill was sent to Kouki's party by the Behemoth. In the group, there was a single girl that glared back at the monster; ignorant of the tension building up in the others.

The girl was Kaori. Unheard by anyone, Kaori with will declared to herself.

"I won't let you take anyone else. I will overcome you and go down to him."

Now, the fight to conquer their past began.

* * *

Translator's Note:

Author's note talks a little more about the dungeon. I'll translate it later if there is any interest, but for now I'll give a summary. He talks about how the comparison of strength in the dungeon. The behemoth is the strongest on the 65th floor but that's just the upper level of the dungeon. Orcus went further than 100 levels that the people were aware of. Hajime had fallen in the abyss that was lower than those 100 levels. The monsters in the lower level (abyss) are much stronger than the upper levels (100 and up?).

He also showed as Kouki's stats

* * *

Name	Yuuki Otonashi		
Age	14		
Gender	Male		
Class	Human		
Strength	360		
Agility	360		
Resistance	360		
Magic Resistance	360		
Skills			

- Aptitude All Attribute
- Resist All Elements
- Resist Physical
- Complex Magic
- Swordplay
- Herculean Strength
- Quick Movement
- Foresight
- High-speed Magic Recovery
- Sign Perception
- Magic Perception
- Limit Break
- Language Comprehension

Arifureta: Volume 2 Chapter 9

Beyond the Past (Classmate Side 2 Part II)

Kouki made the first move.

“Myriad of Soaring Wings, Reach the Heavens, “Soaring Flash””

The curved slash of light struck the Behemoth with a roar. Before he wasn’t even able to injury the Behemoth with his strongest skill “Might of Heaven”. However, he wanted to show that he wasn’t the same as back then, and it was proven.

“Guurugaa!!”

A diagonal sword line ran appeared on the Behemoth’s chest. It scraped the ground and screamed as its dark red blood dripped onto the ground.

“We can do it! We are certainly stronger! Nagayama left side, Hiyama take the rear, Meld take the right side! Rear guard ready magic! High grade magic!”

Kouki gave out instructions rapidly. The results of Meld’s officer training.

“Oh, he gave good instruction without hesitation. Did you hear? All hands, follow Kouki’s command!”

Meld shouted and ran to wrap the right side of the Behemoth with his knights. Everyone started to move at that moment and encircle the Behemoth.

The vanguard quickly devised a line of defense that was desperate in preventing the raging Behemoth from reaching the rear guard.

“Guruuaa!”

With the roar the Behemoth stepped into the ground and pulverized it as it charged.

“Like I’ll let you!”

“I won’t allow it!”

Ryutaro and Jugo, the two biggest members of the class, quickly huddled the Behemoth and started to wrestle with it.

“”The power to break the earth! “Herculean Strength”!””

Using their physical strength, strengthened by magic, they took the Behemoth's rush while they feet slide on the ground.

"Gaaa!"

"Raaaa!"

"Oooooh!!"

Each of the three gave out a yell and strained their muscles. The smaller humans was not able to completely stop the Behemoth but it was enough to kill its momentum. It stomped on the ground in anger at that.

The other members did not miss the chance this brought.

"Supreme flash that cuts all, "Absolute Sever"!"

Shizuku's battojutsu hit the Behemoth in the horn. Even with a sword artifact that added to the sharpness of the magic, it stopped midway and couldn't complete the sever.

[T/N: Battojutsu: The art of the draw. Closely related to Iaido. This is the act of drawing the sword from the sheath and using that motion to accelerate the blade. Himura Kenshin from Kenshin is famous for this, so much that he is called the Battosai. If you want to see some examples of it then watch his fights.]

“As hard as ever.”

“Leave it to me! Grind, Crush, Blast, “Grand Hammer”!”

Meld jumped and flung his own sword at Shizuku’s sword that was stuck in the middle. The sharp, heavy blow enhanced by magic helped strengthen Shizuku’s sword and pushes it forward.

With that one of the Behemoth’s horn is severed.

“Gaaaa!?”

The Behemoth goes on a wild rampage with all its might after the cut. This rampage blew the four people away.

“The gentle light that embraces all, “Halo”!”

An innumerable amount of nets made of light sprang forth and wrapped the four gently, after they had struck the floor and lost their breath. What Kaori used was a shape-shifting defensive light magic that killed the shock.

In a flash, Kaori started to chant a healing spell.

“Heaven’s Blessing, heal universally, “Restore Heaven”!”

Even though all four did not experience at the same time, they were all being healed. The spell was a ranged recovery spell that was at an intermediate level. It could heal multiple people at the same time. “Restore Heaven” was a higher rank version of the “Heaven’s Blessing” she used before.

Kouki took a thrusting stance and rushed straight for the rioting Behemoth. He stabbed his sword into the previous wound as he finished an aria.

“”Light Burst!””

The enormous magic stored in the Holy Sword flowed into the wound and caused an explosion.

“Gaaa!!”

A large quantity of blood gouged out of the wound. The Behemoth brandish its sharp claws at Kouki during the slight pause after he executed the skill.

“Kuuu!”

Kouki raised a groan and was blown away. The St. Armour he worse reflected the claws, but the impact still passed through and caused a coughing fit for him. The pains was just a moment. Kaori

quickly followed up with a heal.

“Heaven’s Blessing, restore his strength, “Restless Heaven”!”

This spell has lost the efficiency of healing multiple people, but it increased its power for single targets. Kouki recovered instantly the light enveloped him.

The Behemoth was blown other members away when Kouki was knocked back. Without minding its injury it started to glow red hot.

“…Even if its horn is gone, it can use the spell. Here it comes!”

Shizuku’s warning and the Behemoth leap came at the same time. Everyone had already experienced the Behemoth’s Special Magic. However, the jump distance of this Behemoth was unexpected. The beast easily leap over the vanguard and advanced to the rear guard. It never jumped like that on the bridge and they didn’t even dream it could jump that much. Vanguard members showed an impatient expression.

One of the rear guard stop their chant and stepped forward. It was Taniguchi Suzu.

“Herein a Sanctuary, enemies of god shall not pass, “Absolute Virtue”!”

The dome of light appeared just as the Behemoth landed like a meteor. A terrible sonicboom and shockwave spread from the area and the surrounding floor broke into cobwebs.

However, the absolute defense Suzu made took the force of the Behemoths blow. But her version was the 2 verse version of the shield, not the 4 verse, so it didn't have its original power.

The shield already had cracks in it. If Suzu's class wasn't "Barrier Master" it wouldn't have even formed. Suzu grit her teeth as she poured 2 verse worth of magic into a spell that usually didn't use that amount. She continued to picture the spell's image in her mind as she raised both hands desperately. The barrier that showed cracks disappeared. She believed her defense was absolute.

"Uuu! I won't lose!"

From the Behemoth, eyes full of murderous intent pierced the barrier and landed on Suzu. Her body was struck with fear and her hands shaked. She shouted desperately to convey her limit. The Behemoth continued its attack and she wouldn't be able to hold for more than 10 seconds.

Its going to break! When Suzu thought that in her heart.

"Heaven's Blessing, a mystery here, "Yielding Heaven"!"

Suzu's body was wrapped in light, and with it the amount of magic poured into her spell increased. This was Kaori's spell to recover magic. Originally, it was a spell to restore others magic, moves according to the magic directed in its formula, inflow can be made to amplify to original amount. That how this spell works. Kaori could only use it because of her "Healer" class.

"If its this! I love you Kaorin!"

Suzu poured the original 4 verse worth of magic into the shield and it was restored perfectly. All the cracks were repaired in an instant. Frustrated that it couldn't break through the barrier, it gave an angry scowl at the impertinent caster. She didn't budge at the stare and returned one instead.

Finally, the horn started to lose its red hot effect. The Behemoth loses its momentum and falls to the ground. Suzu's barrier ceased to exist at the same time.

Behemoth tried to aim at the breathing Suzu, but the vanguard was already on top of it.

"Rear guard retreat!"

The back group fell back at Kouki's direction, and the advance guard enclosed upon the monster. A hit and evade strategy was used on the Behemoth, until the rear guard finished their chant.

“Step Back!”

Eri, the rear guard representative, signaled. Kouki and the others at that signal distanced themselves from the Behemoth.

After they retreated, an advanced fire based magic spell went off.

“”””””Scorching Sun”””””””

Five people performed this advanced spell. High-temperature flames gathered into a sphere, and burned the surrounding area like the sun. The “Scorching Sun” was made directly above the Behemoth and was 8 m in diameter; immediately after it swelled it was dropped onto the beast.

A tremendous amount of heat attacks the Behemoth. The magnitude of the power was too much that an ally might have gotten damaged. So, they quickly put up a barrier. “Scorching Sun” did not give any spare time for the Behemoth to escape, and soon its strong outer crust started to melt.

“Guuruagaaa!!”

The Behemoth’s death throes filled the hall. A familiar scream from that day. Its cries were earsplitting, but soon it was exhausted like it was burnt away by the flames.

In the center of the blacken area, all that remained of the beast were ruins.

“D-Did we win?”

“I think we won…”

“We won…”

“Seriously?”

“Serious?”

Everyone was looking stunned at the area the Behemoth was. Bit by bit mutters of victory spread throughout. Kouki was stunned, and when he regained himself; he hoisted his Holy Sword above his head and straightened his back.

“That’s right! It’s our victory!”

The sword seemed to respond to his feelings as it started to sparkle. At his victory cry, the others came to the same realization and cheers arose. Guys were patting each other shoulders, while the girls hugged each other. Meld and the knights were impressed.

Shizuku called out to Kaori, who was still staring at the place the Behemoth occupied.

“Kaori? What’s the matter?”

“Eh, Ahh, Shizuku-chan…Yeah, it’s nothing. I was just thinking how far we came.”

Kaori answered Shizuku with a wry smile. She was immersed in her emotions after defeating her previous nightmare and confirming she was stronger now.

“That’s right. We did get stronger.”

“Yeah…Shizuku-chan. Further ahead is Nagumo-kun…”

“You are going to check, right? It was for that reason you tried your best.”

“Ehehe, that’s right.”

To move forward. To ascertain Hajime’s state, because of possible specifics. Scared that there would be no answer, she became faint-hearted. Shizuku sympathized, and held Kaori’s hand.

Kaori showed a smile at her forceful grip.

Kouki started to gather around the two.

“Are you two safe? Kaori, your heals were the best. If you are here, I fear nothing!”

A refreshing smile dawned on his face as he thanked the two.

“Eh, I’m fine. Are you fine too, Kouki?”

“Yeah, no problems. Kouki-kun, I was glad to have been helpful to everyone.”

The two also gave a smile in return. However, Kouki’s words casted a small shadow over their hearts.

“With this, Nagumo-kun can rest in peace. Because the classmates he defended was able to defeat the beast that killed him.”

“”…””

Kouki did not notice the expression Kaori and Shizuku had, as he was immersed with his emotions. In Kouki’s mind, the only reason Hajime fell into the abyss was the Behemoth. There was no

mistake. The direct cause of the bridge collapsing was the shock from the Behemoth's attacks. However, the magic that hit Hajime was the real reason.

Right now there was an unspoken agreement to not talk about what happened, but the fact does not change. Kouki seemed to just forget or was unaware about this fact, and thought that defeating the Behemoth would allow Hajime to rest in peace. For he unconditionally believed in the good will of people. Those that were negligent would not be blamed forever. Besides, he would never dream that someone had done it intentionally.

However, even if she didn't mind it, she won't forget about it. Since she did not know "who", she just tolerated. She would certainly torture severely(*) if she knew. That is why she is shocked at how Kouki forgot that fact.

Shizuku dropped a sigh. She wanted to complain reflexively, but Kouki did not mean anything bad with it. Rather, his speech was his best at thinking about Hajime and Kaori. In a sense, that is why standing up to him would be bad. In addition, the classmates were celebrating. Shizuku was woman who could read the atmosphere, so talking about this out loud was not the time.

An energetic girl flew in this delicate atmosphere.

"Kaorin!"

Suzu embraced Kaori after calling her out with such a weird way.

“Fuwa!?”

“Ehehe, Kaorin, I super love you. If Kaorin didn’t support me, I would have been flattened.”

“M-Mou, Suzu-chan. Where are you touching!”

“Gehehe, is this place okay? I guess this place is no good?”(*)

She was embarrassed by what Suzu was saying, Suzu got carried away and started to fondle Kaori’s body like an old pervert. In response, Shizuku gave a chop. An intense tsukkomi smashed into Suzu’s head.

“Stop it. Who is Suzu’s?…Kaori is mine.”

“Shizuku-chan!?”

“Fu, I won’t allow it~. Only Suzu will get to do those things with Kaorin.”

“S-Suzu-chan!? What are you thinking of!?”

Kaori was stuck between Shizuku and Suzu, so she quickly did a tsukkomi. The delicate atmosphere was gone.

From this point on, they would be entering unexplored territory. They had shaken off their past and advanced.

Arifureta: Volume 2 Chapter 10

A Partner's Abilities

"Da-a, damn!"

"…Hajime, Fight…"

"You're too carefree!"

Currently, they were traversing through savage grass with Yue on his shoulder. These grass grew up to 160 cm and goes up to his shoulders. If Yue was to walk in this, her figure would disappear. Then came the reason for their escaping through this grass.

""""""""""""""""""Shaa!!""""""""""""""""""

There were nearly 200 demons chasing them.

After Hajime had finished resupplying, they had advanced 10 levels. Hajime's equipment and skills were useful in their journey, and Yue's magic was also a big factor in their progress.

Yue could use any magic and Hajime supported her with his skills.

Her barrier and recovery magic was not that great. Since she had “Auto Regen”, she may have thought it was unnecessary. There was no problem because Hajime had his “potion”.

That is how they advanced to this present level. The floor had an appearance of a forest, an extensive forest. Lush and dense trees over 10 m tall lined the forest, and the atmosphere was damp. Good thing it was not hot like the tropical forest level he encountered.

When Hajime and Yue were searching for the stairs to the lower floor, a rumbling of the ground occurred. A demon the reminded Hajime of a huge reptile appeared in front of them. It like a tyrannosaurus rex, but there was a flower on its head. Sharps tusk thirsting for blood surged from the powerful beast, and the sunflower-like flower fluttered on top. It was a surreal experience.

Tyrannosaurus rex gave out a roar and rushed at them.

Hajime calmly took out Donner…before that Yue raised her hand.

“”Scarlet Spear””

A flame appeared at Yue’s hand that spiralled into a spear form. The spear shot pierced through the T-Rex mouth and penetrated out the back. Its life ended as the surroundings melted. A rumble sounded as the T-Rex fell sideways onto the ground, and the flower on its head plopped onto the ground.

“…”

Hajime stayed silent for a bit. Yue seemed to be incomparably intense these days. In the beginning, she would devote herself to covering Hajime. On their journey she started to instantly kill any monsters that opposed Hajime. He started to feel depressed at being useless. Is it because he dragged his feet and it was over before he could do anything? His mind was seized with anxiety. If such a thing was true, he was going to have a blow to his confidence.

He address Yue with a forced smile as he kept Donner in his hands.

“Ah, Yue? It is good to be enthusiastic…Recently, I felt like, I haven’t done much…”

Yue turned to look at Hajime, and Hajime could see a slight proud look in her expressionless face.

“…I want to be useful…because I’m your partner…”

Seems, she wasn’t content with just covering Hajime. He did think that since they were going to travel together from now on, as partner they should rely on each other. At that time, Yue collapsed after using up all her magic. Hajime had said it to comfort her after she released…it seems to have remained deep in her mind. She wanted to show her worth as his partner.

“Haha, no. You already helped me so much. Yue’s magic is very powerful, so please take the rear; close combat isn’t your strong suit. The frontlines is for me.”

“…Hajime…okay…”

Yue fell silent at Hajime’s advice. He smiled at Yue, who was trying too much to be helpful to Hajime. To show he didn’t dislike her, he stroke her soft hair. Yue’s expression returned to her usual mood. Hajime couldn’t say anything.

Because he didn’t want to become dependent, he had to be cautious…While he thought that, he inadvertently spoiled himself. Hajime was amazed at that.

In a sense, these two were flirting, but Hajime caught a demon signature on his “Perception”. Approximately 10 of them were coming towards them. From the movements of the leader, it seemed to be a two-tailed wolf? He wanted to check it out, and urged Yue to move. Hajime wanted to move into an advantageous place because of their numbers.

When the beasts were trying to encircle him, Hajime rushed at one of them. Before he could finish a 2 m reptile dropped from the overgrowth in the trees. The reptile’s appearance was similar to a raptor. There was a tulip blooming on its head.

“…Cute…”

“…Is it fashion?”

Yue muttered unintentionally as she felt unwinded. Hajime turned his eyes towards the demon and murmured an impossible guess.

The raptor and T-rex both had these unknown flowers! It seems to scatter bloodlust as it growls. War preparation. The flower sways and flutters…

“Shaaa!!”

Looking at Hajime who was occupied with its flower, the Raptor pounced. There were 20 cm talons attached to its tough legs. A heinous light glint off of those talons. Hajime and Yue stepped back, but parted left and right. Hajime went overhead the raptor with his “Air Walk”. He then shot at the tulip to test it.

All parts of the flower scattered with the sound of gunfire. The raptor seemed to twitch for a moment, it rolled as it failed its landing. It somersaulted into a tree and stopped moving. Silence filled the scene. Yue comes near Hajime as she looks at the raptor and the scattered tulip.

“…Dead?”

“No, it seems alive…”

Just as Hajime said, the body started to twitch. The raptor got up and looked around. It saw its

fallen tulip on the ground and stomped it. Not giving a care to its enemies.

“Eh, that reaction, What does it mean?”

“…Prank.”

“…No, its not a schoolchild that put a paper on its back.”

When it was satisfied, it looked to the heavens like it was saying: “Phew, Good job!” A cry was raised. The raptor faced Hajime and was startled.

“Did you notice it? It was in a trance.”

“…Bullying afterall.”

Hajime tsukkomi’d, and Yue looked at it with sympathy. The raptor stiffened for a while. Eventually it took a low posture, fangs exposed and leapt. Hajime shot Donner at the raptor’s open mouth.

The bullet pierced through the raptor mouth then exited out of its

back head, and disappeared into the forest behind.

With the momentum of its jump, the raptor slide on the ground. Hajime and Yue looked at the corpse of the raptor without saying anything.

“Really, what on earth?”

“…It was bullied. To be beaten…pity.”

“No, it wasn’t bullying, definitely wasn’t.”

Hajime stopped trying to figure it out because he did not understand how the demons think. They started to move to an advantageous place because the encircling monsters were getting closer.

Countless thick 5m in diameter trees stretched on and on in the new area they were in. Neighboring trees’ branches were intertwined with each other. Hajime used his “Air Walk” and Yue used wind magic to jump overhead the branches. LIke an air corridor. Hajime was going to exterminate the demons by sniping at them from overhead.

Less than 5 minutes later, raptors began to appear under them. Hajime intended to throw an incendiary grenade, however, he froze. Yue had also hardened with her hand ready to unleash her magic. Because…

“Why do all these guys have flowers?”

“Flower garden…”

There were more than 10 raptors and all of them had flowers on their heads. A variety of flowers too.

Hajime’s unintentionally Tsukkomi had attracted the attention of all the raptors. The raptors then took stances to leap into attack. Hajime’s strategy was to stay out of their range then snipe them with Donner and drops a incendiary grenade to start off. Shots are fired in succession, a white flash precedes each death, one by one raptors die with their heads blown off. Yue was using her “Scarlet Spear” to kill the surrounding raptors.

Three seconds later, the incendiary grenade explodes in the middle of the raptor group. Tar blazing at 3000 degree centigrade splattered onto the raptors. Hajime heaves a sigh of relief after he saw that his weapons worked on the monsters of this level. Seems like that scorpion was special.

Less than 10 seconds later, all the enemies had been cleared. However, Hajime had a dull look. Yue noticed this and tilted her head as she walked towards him.

“…Hajime?”

“…Yue, Isn’t it weird?”

“?”

“They were too weak.”

Yue took noticed after his words. That was true, the T-rex and raptor was easily exterminated because they made such easy movements and normal attacks. Their unnatural movement was almost mechanical and even their blood lust. After watching the scene where the raptor trampled the flower in anger, he felt that the flowers were not suppose to be on them.

The moment when Hajime was going to tell Yue to advance carefully, his “Perception” caught more approaching demons. A vast amount of demons were gathering from all directions. His “Perception” range was at a 20 m radius, and all the demons he sensed was coming straight for them.

“Yue, this is bad. I’m picking up 30, no, 40 or more monsters coming our way. Someone seems to be ordering them to surround us in all directions.”

“…Do we run?”

“…No, we can’t with this many. Better to exterminate them from on top of the tallest tree.”

“Hn…let’s go oversized.”

“Oh, I’ll bite.”

Moving at high speed, they quickly went to find the highest tree in the area. They destroyed the branches that could help the demons climbed upwards.

Hajime waits calmly while holding Donner. Yue understood and gently grabbed the hem of his clothes. His hand was occupied so he used his body as substitute a hold. Her grip became a little stronger.

Then the first batch arrived. Not just raptors, but also T-rexes. The T-rexes were ramming the tree, and the raptors were using their talons to climb the tree.

Hajime pulled the trigger on Donner. He shot towards the earth to hit the climbing raptors. When Donner’s chambers were exhausted, Hajime exposed the cylinder. With a rotation he uses the ejector rod to clear the chambers and loads the gun positioned within his left armpit. During this 5 seconds. The incendiary grenade he dropped before the shooting, explodes onto the monsters. Flames scatter the area. Donner blazes again after it was reloaded. 15 of the monsters already fell, but that was not enough.

Soon, an additional 30 raptors and 4 T-rexes have gathered under their eyes. They were attempting to smash the tree Hajime was on,

or climb up to attack him.

“Hajime?”

“Not yet…A little more.”

Hajime answered Yue, while he was shooting down at the raptors. She continued to concentrate on her magic barrage, as she believed in him.

Finally, more than 50 monsters gathered below them. This was just a guess because it was hard to distinguish now. He sent a signal to Yue to say that the monsters he sensed with “Perception” were accounted for.

“Yue!”

“Okay! “Freezing Hell”!”

When Yue triggered her magic, underneath them an area was frozen and it was spreading. The area was being covered in blue ice. When the ice touched the demons, the ice covered them like a coffin. There was not even a moment to resist. Monsters lost the light in their eyes after they were encased in ice. An area of 50 m square was frozen from the spell. It was worthy of being call “Extermination Magic”.

“Haa…Haa..”

“Good job. Indeed a “Vampire Princess”.”

“…Kufufu…”

Hajime gives Yue praise at the spectacle before them. Just like the spell’s name, it truly looked like a frozen hell in the surrounding area. Yue ran out of magic after using that superlative magic. She gasped for breath. Probably, she is having a case of fatigue.

He sat down beside her and placed a hand on her hips to support her, and presented his nape. To allow her to recover by drinking his blood. Although she does recover from the “potion”, but it takes a long time for a vampire to recover with it. Blood seemed the best.

Yue was embarrassed, inspite of her deadpan look, at Hajime’s praise and just laughed. She blushed as she placed her mouth against his neck.

But Hajime stands up with a grim expression. He was sensing more than 100 demons.

“Yue, there are several times more.”

“!?”

“If it is this many, there is something going on. We just eliminated them all right now. Yet, another suicide attack…like they were compelled to…that flower…maybe.”

“…Parasite.”

“Yue thinks so too?”

She nodded to affirm his guess.

“…There should be a main body.”

“Seems, that as long as those flowers are on them, they are puppets. We are up against all the monsters on this floor.”

Before Hajime is crushed by the amount, he should look for the main body. Looking for the lower floor would be hard if they didn’t take care of them. Though they could find it along the way.

There wasn’t time to let Yue suck his blood, so he tried to pass her the sacred water. however, Yue refused it. She stretched both her hands out towards the confused Hajime and says…

“Hajime…Carry…”

“How old are you? Are you trying to suck my blood while we move?”

Hajime was correct. Yue nodded her head to answer him. Magical power recovery was slow for Yue with the sacred water, and they should keep a contingency plan for recovery. When he is desperately busying himself, he eventually feels a few resistance. But, necessity knows no laws.

He consented to carrying her…Because it would get in the way. He gave her a piggyback ride, as he started his search for the main body.

And this is how we end up with the current situation.

They were being chased by close to 200 demons. The thicket was troublesome. Yue had already finished her meal but she didn’t get off his back.

From the demons behind.

Dododododododododododo

Monsters approach them while making that noise. Raptors travels side by side while hiding in the tall grass, and pouncing from all directions. Hajime ran towards the place he considered most

suspicious, while he counterattacked. Yue did not allow the siege to overwhelm them by using her magic.

Kapu, Chu

The two glared at the exit of the forest ahead. On the other side was the wall of the labyrinth. It looked like a cave with crack spreading from the center. Why, was this place the objective? The attacking demons had a constant habit in their movements. Hajime countered while they advanced. Their movements become violent when they attempted to escape in a certain direction. As if, they were trying to lead them away from there. They decided to rush in that direction because the demons were increasing in number and they couldn't stay in this situation.

Apparently, hiding in the grass had already made it fail. Hajime jumps ahead with "Air Walk" and "Flicker".

Kapu, Chu [sound of blood sucking]

"Yue-san!? Can you stop the blood sucking that has been going on?"

"…Inevitable."

"Lies! You aren't exhausted anymore."

“…Those guys’ flower…I’m also…Ku.”

“What are you groaning unnaturally? Don’t try to shift the blame, Baka! I can’t afford it, hey!”

Inspite of the situation, Yue was obsessed with Hajime’s blood. It was not odd that a former royalty couldn’t control their guts. Although he was playing, he properly countered. Hajime jumped into the cracks, as he took along 200 monsters.

The cave’s cracks were narrow for two average adults standing side by side. Of course, the T-rex couldn’t fit through it, and the raptors could only enter one by one. One of the raptors that entered teared to tear Hajime with its extended claws. Before it could attack, Hajime shot it with Donner. He used his transmutation to block the crack.

“Phew, We’ll be okay for a bit with this.”

“…Good job.”

“If you feel so, get down.”

“…Mu…no choice.”

Yue reluctantly descends with Hajime’s words. His back seemed to be very comfortable.

“So then, those guys were very desperate. Is this place, bingo? Do not relax your guard.”

“Okay.”

Since the entrance was closed with transmutation, the two continued deeper into the cave.

They arrived into a big hall after traveling for a while. Cracks were even continuing into the depths of the halls. Perhaps it was the stairs to the lower level. Hajime feels the area. He did not sense anything but he kept his guard up because of an unpleasant feeling. There were a lot of demons in this dungeon that could hide from his senses.

When they arrived at the center of the room, then it happened. From all direction, an innumerable amount of green ping pong balls few in. Yue and Hajime was instantly back to back, and intercepting the flying balls. Hajime decided to create a stone wall because of the number that exceeded 100. The wall was strong enough to prevent the balls from piercing it. Seems like the balls didn’t have that much power. Yue was able to intercept the balls with her wind magic, with its excellent speed, without a problem.

“Yue, it’s probably an attack from the main body. Do you know where it is?”

“…”

“Yue?”

Hajime asked her if she knew of its location. Yue did not have a searching skill like “perception”, but as a vampire she had sharper senses than Hajime. However, she didn’t answer his question. Suspicious, Hajime called out to her, but his answer…

“…Run…Hajime!”

Before anyone knew it, her hand faced Hajime. Wind converged onto her hand. Instinct warned violently, and Hajime jumped aside with full power. A blade of strong wind passes the place where Hajime used to be and bisects the cliff in the back.

“Yue!?”

Hajime wanted to raise his voice at the surprise attack, but he understood when he saw what was on her head. There was a blooming flower on Yue’s head. Did it match Yue? It was a crimson rose that matched her well.

“Shit, was it those green balls!?”

He wanted to beat himself for his carelessness. Hajime continued to avoid the wind attacks from Yue.

“Hajime…Uhh…”

Yue broke her deadpan expression for a sorrowful one. When he shot the raptor’s flower, it stomped on the flower. That would mean that the victim’s consciousness is still there while being manipulated. Only deprived the body of its freedom.

But then he already knew of how to free her. Hajime tried to draw the trigger as he aimed at the flower. However, the controller knew of Hajime’s firearm that shot down the previous flower. Yue’s body moved to cover the flower. She was moving around alot that there was a chance the shot would blow her face away. Hajime closed in to cut it, but Yue hit her own head.

“…You got some nerves…”

It was warning Hajime to stay away, Yue would be the target of the magic if he didn’t. Yue surely was almost immortal. However, he couldn’t deny that she might have a spell that could disintegrate her and prevent her regen. Yue would be able to fire it at an instant too. He wanted to avoid the gamble of a suicide attack.

The monster appeared from the dark cracks as it understood Hajime’s hesitation.

A demon that was the mix of a woman and a plant came out. It was similar to a dryad or aruraune in RPGs. The demon appeared before Hajime. There is a legend that dryads brings good luck, if not hostile, and they were beautiful woman. But the one in front of him did not give that impression. Indeed, it looked like a human

woman, but it had an ugly face like its inner ugliness was overflowing. It also had countless vines waving around, and it felt creepy. “Her” mouth was laughing and grinning at something.

Hajime pointed his gun at it at once. However, Yue entered his line of fire.

“Hajime…Sorry…”

Yue grits her teeth with a mortified expression. Being unable to control herself was probably intolerable. She should still be resisting it desperately. Blood dripped from her lips as she moved her mouth to apologizes. Her sharp fangs were probably the cause. Was she frustrated with herself, or the curse, or both?

The aruraune fires a green ball into Hajime while using Yue as a shield. Hajime brushes it off with Donner. It was destroyed, though not visible, and probably scattered spores around. There was no sign of a flower blooming on Hajime. Laughter stopped coming from the demon and it looked confused. Spores did not seem to work on Hajime.

(Most likely, it is because of all my resistances.)

Just as Hajime guessed, the spores were a kind of neurotoxin. His “Poison Resist” allowed him to resist it. It was sheer luck for Hajime, Yue can’t be blamed for anything. She shouldn’t feel heartbreak.

Realizing that the spores were useless against Hajime, the demon grumply ordered Yue to cast her spell. Again a blade of wind was formed. Hajime thought it wasn't able to demonstrate the full capability of the victims. The raptors movements were evidence of this.

(That's a blessing in disguise)

If he tried to avoid the blade of wind, the aruraune would just threaten to hurt Yue. He used "Vajra", obtained from cyclops, to endure the blades. This skill solidify and expands magic to cover the whole body. A very reliable skill that demonstrates defensive power equivalent to its name. Because he was still inexperienced with it, Hajime could only display 1/10 of its original power. The blades had no power even if it was sharp, so he was able to endure it.

(There is a method to settle this immediately once…afterwards would be scary…or throw an incendiary grenade?)

As Hajime was pondering the situation, Yue raised a sorrowful cry.

"Hajime!…I'll be fine…just shoot!"

Yue had prepared herself for this. If she couldn't control herself then she would rather have Hajime shoot her. She put that kind of will into her eyes that watched Hajime.

There was no way he could do that. For sure he would save her. Such a hot line would usually jump out at this scene, to bond with the heroine. The previous Hajime would do it. But the current Hajime would disappoint such expectations.

“Eh, is that okay? That’ll save me.”

Bang!

Gunfire echoes in the hall. When he heard Yue’s words, he pulled the trigger without hesitation. The hall was filled with a cold air and silence. Rose petals were dancing in the air and fell onto the ground.

Yue was blinking her eyes with surprise. Aruraune was linking its eyes with surprise. To confirm it was gone, Yue placed both her hands on her head. There was blond hair that had frizzled or were torn off. Aruraune also understood the situation. It stared at Hajime with accusing eyes.

“No, don’t make such eyes.”

Bang!

He discharged his gun with his Tsukkomi. The aruraune’s head exploded into green liquids. It fell down to the ground while convulsing.

“So, Yue, are you fine? No discomfort?”

Hajime confirms Yue’s safety with a laid-back feeling. However, Yue is glaring at Hajime while stroking her head.

“…You shot.”

“Ah? Well you did say shoot.”

“…You didn’t hesitate…”

“That, I finally decided to shoot. I had confidence in my aim. As expected, Yue was to stomach it without any question. From now on I’ll put that into consideration.”

“…My scalp was shaved a little…maybe…”

“Well, if its that much you’ll regen it? No problem.”

“Uhh~…”

Yue started to hit Hajime’s stomach repeatedly with a face that said “That is certainly true, but…” Indeed, she told him to shoot, and

she had prepared herself. But Yue is a woman. She had seen some dreams. He should have at least hesitated a little. At such a light response, she wanted to complain.

Hajime did not worry for Yue after he found out that a manipulated Yue wouldn't be able to use high-level magic. There were few spells that could overcome her immortality. It was unpleasant to shoot without hesitation. Even if it was the biggest taboo to hesitate in combat. He tilted his head in wonder at what she was dissatisfied with. She was losing to such a Hajime, and just turned away from him with a pout.

Hajime sighed inwardly, how was he going to fix the mood. This would be harder than beating the Aruraune.

Arifureta: Volume 3 Chapter 1

The Guardian of the Depths

There was no question that the Aruraune was dead, Yue was still hurt. After that event, she sucked Hajime's blood until he fainted. That was successful enough to put her back into a good mood, so they continued their journey.

Their journey continued until they had descended 100 levels from where Hajime first started. Before each level he would check his equipment and supplies. As always, whenever Hajime worked Yue would stare at him working. She was really watching Hajime rather than the work. Even now she was watching him work from his right side while relaxing. Her expression did not suit the atmosphere of the dungeon.

They did not know how many days have passed since they met, because there was no sense of time underground. Recently, Yue was displaying a more comfortable expression. She was even acting a little spoiled.

Whenever they were resting at base, she would especially get glued to him. If he laid down, she would cling on his arm while they slept near each other. Yue would embrace him from the back when he sat down. When she fed on his blood, she would cuddle him from the front. She would stay there even after she was done feeding. With a content expression, she would rub her face on his chest.

Hajime is a man. Yue with her 12 years old appearance was charming and should not easily invoke lust, but she was older than that. For the one being bewitched from that glimpse, it was troublesome. Still they were in the dungeon, the tension in the helped him bear with it. When they returned to the surface, he didn't have much confidence in resisting her advances with her adult mode. There may not be the meaning to impart…

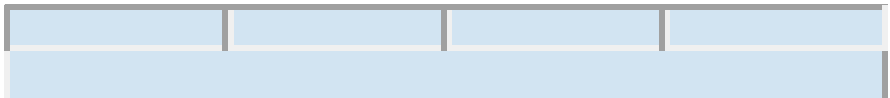
"Hajime…as careful as usual…"

"Hmm? Ah, because its the 100th floor next. I thought there might be something there. The upper dungeon is believed to have 100 floors…just in case."

When Hajime passed the 80th floor of this place, he thought there was a possibility that the place they were in was no longer the usual "Orcus Dungeon". He had the same feeling as when he fell into the abyss. Judging from what he sensed as he traversed this level, this was certainly a basement a way off from the usual labyrinth.

Firearms, martial arts, special magic, weapons, and transmutation. After polishing these skills, Hajime had confidence in himself. He wouldn't be taken down easily. However, this place was scary enough to kill him even with his abilities.

That is why he prepared as much as possible. Hajime's current status…



Name	Yuma Oda		
Age	17 Years Old		
Gender	Male		
Class	Transmutation Artist (Synergist)		
Strength	2080		
Stamina	2050		
Agility	2050		
Magic Resistance	1786		

Skills

- Transmutation
  - Mineral Appraisal
  - Precision Transmutation
  - Mineral Enquiry
  - Mineral Separation
  - Mineral Fusion
  - Replica Transmutation
- Magic Manipulation
  - Magic Emission
  - Magic Compression
  - Remote Control
- Iron Stomach
- Lightning Clad
- Divine Step
  - Air Walk
  - Flicker
  - Grand Legs
- Air Claws
- Night Vision
- Far Vision
- Perception
- Magic Perception
- Heat Perception
- Hide Presence
- Poison Resist
- Paralysis Resist
- Petrification Resistance
- Varja

- Coercion
- Telepathic Communication
- Language Comprehension

His status has continuously climbed after his first demon, though he had not received much Special Magic. The stats did not increase anymore from normal monsters, but the boss or high-level monsters still did. Just like the other demons that didn't get Special magic from eating other demons, and his stats were getting harder to raise in his state.

When Hajime and Yue finished all their preparations, they went to the stair that led them down.

The level they stumbled upon, was a very large space supported by a vast number of pillars. Each of the pillars where 5m in diameter, and each had spirals designs and vine patterns engraved onto them. Arrangement of each row of pillars was very uniform and had them spaced out evenly. There was about 30 m to the ceiling. Unlike the usual rough ground in the dungeon, this place had beautiful flat ground. The room gave off a solemn atmosphere.

They stepped into the room while they admired it. All the pillars started to shine faintly then. This got them to regain their caution. Pillars lit up sequentially towards the back of the room.

Hajime was vigilant for a while, but they decided to advance because nothing happened. They advanced while making full use of their senses and perception skills. After they progressed 200 m, they found a dead end ahead. No, not a dead end, but a huge door. A double door 10 m tall that had beautiful sculptures engraved

onto it. Particularly, some of the patterns drawn on top of the octagon system

"…This looks amazing. By any chance…"

"Abode of Traitors?"

He had a feeling this was the room with the last boss. Hajime's instincts were sending him warnings, while there was no reaction from his perception skills. It was going to be bad ahead. Yue seemed to feel it too because there was sweat on her forehead.

"Isn't this the great? We finally reached our goal."

Hajime disregards his instinct and puts his bold smile on. He had no choice but to keep going, no matter what was behind there.

"…Hn!"

Yue stares at the door with an expression that told him she was prepared for it.

The two finally walked past the last pillars and advanced towards the door.

At that moment, a huge magic formation about 30 meters wide appeared between them and the door. Crimson light emitted from the magic, and it pulsated.

Hajime recognized this magic. He couldn't forget it, it was the magic that triggered because of the trap that day and caused him to fall into the abyss. But the magic formation for the Behemoth was just 10 m in diameter. The magic formation in front of them was 3 times larger than that, and it was a lot more complex and detailed.

"Hey hey, what's with this size? Is it really the last boss?"

"…It's fine…We won't lose…"

As expected, Hajime smiled. Yue caught one of his arm tightly with a determined expression on her face.

Hajime nodded at Yue's words, and glared at the magic formation. Seems like they wouldn't be able to advance if they didn't defeat the monster that came out of that magic formation.

The formation shined more and more till it finally burst. Hajime and Yue held up their arms to prevent the light from blinding them. When the light disappeared, it was there…

A monster 30 m in length, 6 heads with long necks, sharp fangs, and dark red eyes. Comparably to the Hydra of the myths.

“”””””””Kuruuaan!”””””””””

Those six pair of eyes stared at Hajime as it gave off a strange roar. It seemed to want to bring judgement upon the intruders who didn’t know their place. A fierce thirst for blood, that would have stopped an ordinary man’s heart, was flung at Hajime.

One of the heads with a red crest on it opened its mouth as flames emitted from it. The flames were already on the scale of a huge wall.

Hajime and Yue jumped to the right and left to start their counterattack. Hajime fires Donner at the red head. The bullet blew off the red head.

When Hajime pumped his fist in the air at his victory, one head with a white pattern shouted. White light wrapped around the red head and restored it fully, like time had been reversed. The white head seems to be able to use healing magic.

Yue had launched an ice shard at a green head and blew it away. However, the result was the same as the red one when the white head casted its spell.

Hajime started to speak with Yue through the “Telepathic Communication”, while he tsked.

(“Yue! Aim for that white head! Or it’s endless!”

(“Okay!”)

The head with a blue pattern shot out a gravel of ice from its mouth. Hajime and Yue were aiming for the white head while they avoided the shot.

Bang!

“”Scarlet Spear”!”

A flash of light and a blazing spear shot towards the white head. However, the moment when it was about to hit, the yellow head quickly went into the line of fire and bloated. The head shined yellow and took both of the attacks head on. After the attack settled, there was a flawless yellow head glaring at them.

“Tsk! A shield. That head shields the healing head, a nice balance.”

Hajime threw an incendiary grenade over the heads. At the same time, he fired Donner at the White Head with full power. Yue helped by firing off her “Scarlet Spear” in rapid succession. Her “Azure Sky” may have surpassed the yellow head and hit the white head, but she would be easy prey after using such a strong spell that would exhaust her. She may be able to recover fast if she drank blood, but the heads were probably not going to allow the chance. Unless the number of heads could be halved, she couldn’t

use her best spells.

The yellow head was taking all their attacks. But soon it was showing signs of damage in its previously flawless head.

“Kuruan!”

Its white head heals the yellow head at once. The head performed its healer role perfectly. However, at that moment the incendiary grenade exploded over the white head. Tar at 3000 degree centigrade was scattered around. When it poured onto the white head, it screamed in pain.

Don’t miss this chance! Hajime sent this message telepathically. They planned for a simultaneous attack. Before they could execute, a scream sounded. Yue’s scream.

“Noooo!!”

“!? Yue!”

He quickly tried to rush over to her, but was intercepted by wind blades and fireballs fired by the green head and red head respectively. Yue was still screaming, Hajime wondered what was going on with his teeth clenched. The black head, he realized it had done nothing this whole time.

(No that's wrong, it had already done something.)

Hajime fired Donner at the black head, while he dodged around with "Flicker" and "Air Walk". With the sound of firearm, the black head that was staring at Yue was blown away. Yue collapsed at the same time. He could see that her face was pale even from a distance. The blue head opened its big mouth and stretched its head towards Yue to swallow her.

"Like I'll let you!!"

Hajime prepared himself to get damaged in the storm of wind blades and fireballs as he used his "Flicker". A potentially fatal attack was avoided with the use of Donner and "Air Claws". At the last moment, Hajime arrived between the blue head and Yue. But there was no time to counter, so he quickly triggered "Vajra". Hajime could not use this skill while moving. That is why he stood before Yue to block that attack. The magic covered his body at the same time the head bit him.

"Kururu!"

"Guu!"

While raising a low growl, the blue head swallowed Hajime whole. When it tried to close its jaws, Hajime leaned forward and braced his legs to prevent it from closing. He pushed Donner against the head's upper jaw and pulled the trigger.

The blue head erupted from the blast and bits of its brain flew off. Hajime used his “Grand Kick” on the motionless head. Then he threw a flash grenade and sonic grenade at the Hydra.

“Sonic Grenade” was developed from a demon that could emit ultrasonic waves that they met on the 80th level. The demon had a special organ inside its body that generated these sounds to attack. Hajime did not get any special magic for defeating this monster, but he was able to use its special organ as materials for his new grenade.

Those two grenades covered the Hydra in intense light and ultrasonic waves. Hajime carried Yue and hid behind the pillars with the chance those grenades provided.

“Hey! Yue! Get it together!”

“…”

She didn’t react to his words with her paling expression and trembling body. What the heck did the black head do to her? While he cursed, he slapped Yue’s cheeks. Hajime called out for her telepathically and gave her some sacred water. After a while, light began to dwell in her hollow eyes.

“Yue!”

“…Hajime”

“Yeah, its me. Are you alright? What happened?”

Yue confirmed Hajime’s existence with blinking eyes. She extends out her small hands and touched his face. A relieved sigh escaped her lips as she realized that Hajime was really in front of her, and tears began to collect at the edge of her eyes.

“…What a relief…I thought I was abandoned…alone in the dark again…”

“Ah? What are you talking about?”

Hajime was perplexed at her state. Yue said she saw a scene play out where Hajime had abandoned her and resealed her. When she saw that, a strong sense of insecurity struck her. She became bound by fear then it paralyzed her body and mind.

“Tsk! A debuff spell? Seems like the black head can induce panic into its opponent. Shit, that monster has a good balance of skills!”

“…Hajime.”

Yue watched Hajime curse at the troublesome enemy with her anxious eyes. It was a frightening scene. Being abandoned by Hajime. He was the person to risk his own life at unsealing her after 300 years. He who didn’t treat her differently after she told

him she was a vampire, and allow her to fed off of him day-by-day. It was unavoidable that her heart yielded.

The only place for Yue was besides Hajime. How nice it was when they promised to return to Hajime's hometown together. She didn't even want to imagine being alone again. Therefore the planted nightmare was stuck in her head and ate her up. Hajime stands up at the sign of the Hydra recovering from the confusion. Yue detained him involuntarily when she grabbed his clothes.

"…I…"

She was shaking with an uneasy expression that was close to crying. Hajime finally understood what nightmare she saw and what she was currently thinking. In his usual manner, he was able to perceive her feelings. Either way, he had promised to take her to Japan. There was no reason to pretend not to know.

He would probably be able to comfort her with words, but there was no time for that. If he said some half-hearted words, she would still fall prey to the black head's magic. There was a possibility that Hajime would mess up, but at that time he will follow Yue. While he thought of that excuse, Hajime scratched his head and squatted in front of Yue to meet her eyes.

And then…

"?…!?"

Hajime inclined his head and kissed Yue.

Their lips only touched a bit, but Yue had a dramatic reaction. She just seriously stared at Hajime.

He diverted his eyes bashfully, and led her to stand with his hand.

“We will kill that beast and survive. Then, we will reach the surface and return home…together.”

Yue started at Hajime in utter amazement, then her usual deadpan expression broke down to gently display a beautiful smile.

“Yes!”

Hajime cleared his throat to gather himself and informed Yue of the strategy.

“Yue, I’m going to use the Schlagen. It can’t fire continuously, so please cover me.”

“…Leave it to me!”

Yue is suddenly full of motivation. Her quiet mutters were gone, and in place was a voice full of ambition. All the anxiety before

vanished completely.

It seems like there had been a breakthrough in various ways. Hajime recalled his usual lack of independence, he thinks about the future, maybe he acted rashly. However, the Hydra performed an explosion. The beast roared as it pelleted the area Hajime and Yue were at with fireballs, wind blades, and ice shards.

Two people jumped out of the shadow of the pillar and started their counterattack.

“”Scarlet Spear”! “Imperial Cannon”! “Frozen Rain”!”

The trigger for the magic was activated rapidly. Magic built up at an impossible speed, an ice tornado accompanied a spiralling spear with vacuum blades whirling around it and a sharp needle attacks the Hydra all at once. She had aimed for the gap when they attacked and launched it towards the red, green, and blue head to force the yellow head to act. But it didn’t move as the yellow head noticed Hajime aiming for the white head, it raised a roar.

“Kuruuan!”

Then a nearby pillar waved and it transformed into an impromptu shield. This yellow head seems to be able to use a skill similar to the scorpion’s, though the scale was smaller.

Yue’s magic hit the stone walls, it blasted through the vanguard of

walls. The magic directly hit three of the heads.

“””Guruuuu!!”””

Three of the heads screamed and wriggled. When the black head’s eyes caught Yue’s it started to use its debuff magic.

Uneasiness wells up in Yue again. However, Yue remembers her kiss with Hajime before she is crushed by the uneasiness. Then, her body got a passionate feeling and it washed away her anxiety.

“…It doesn’t work anymore!”

In order to cover Hajime, Yue was casting spells rapidly and was emphasizing the number of spells rather than the power of them.

The red head that received healing, blue head, and green head resumed their attacks, and Yue contended with them by herself. They tried to counter each other.

While the three heads were occupied with Yue, Hajime approached the beast with a dash. He was going for a single killing blow, because it would be troublesome if the beast had emergency measures it had yet to use. When the black head realized its magic didn’t work on Yue, it looked for Hajime. The pain, hunger, and anxiety of his time in the abyss rose inside his chest. But…

“So what?”

It was the pasted that he endured a long time ago. Feeling those days were not a big deal now. Hajime blew away the black head with Donner.

The white head tried to recover the head in a split second, but before it could Hajime jumped into the air using his skills and aimed his Schlagen.

Just as he had assumed, the yellow had stood in the way of the shot for the white head.

“Then break together!”

Hajime creates a spark in the Schlagen with his “Lightning Clad”. The bullet was a full metal jacket, the Tauru ore being covered by the Stall ore from the scorpion. Stall ore had a high affinity to magic and it suited “Lightning Clad” well. All the compressed combustion powder was ignited with the spark.

Bang!!

The red bullet was electromagnetically accelerated through the 1.5 m barrel with a tremendous explosive sound. This gun was 10 times more powerful than Donner’s maximum output. With his simple calculation, this rifle was 100 times more powerful than a normal anti-matter rifle. A monster weapon that was not possible

without this world's special ore and magic.

When it was fired, the bullet made a red trail like it was a thick laser. Once, they thought Kouki's spell that was shot at the Behemoth was the trump card, but this made that look like child's play. Yellow head met the bullet directly as it burned through the air.

Although the yellow head had a defense like "Vajra"…but the bullet reached the white head like there was nothing there. The bullet penetrated through everything like nothing as it blasted through the wall in the rear. Vibrations violently wracked the whole level as if an earthquake had happened.

What was left was two necks that looked like two heads had not even existed there. The open wound had been cauterized by the heat and made it seem like it never had those two heads. Debris was littered everywhere, and no one knew how long that bullet kept going only that it left a huge hole in the wall.

The other heads did not think that almost half of its heads could be extinguished in a single moment. Even Yue was staring at Hajime in utter amazement and had forgotten her enemy. Hajime landed flat on the ground, There was smoke rising out of Schlagen's as the round was ejected. When the shell it the floor, the three heads regained its senses. All three pair of eyes glared at Hajime, but their previous opponent was not someone to take their eyes off of.

""Scorching Heaven"!"

Once the Vampire Princess. The existence that caused fear into her own people because of her talents, and caused them to seal her. Power pours into the spell and it was like Heaven's vengeance was being turned against it.

Immediately after, electric discharge started to gather around the 3 heads and soon 6 lightning spheres surround the heads. Soon the electric discharge lengthened and connected all the spheres together, and created a huge lightning globe in the center.

Zugagagagaga!!

When the globe burst, it rained down lightning of great power within the the limits of the 6 smaller spheres. The three heads tried to run, but the surrounding lightning spheres were acting like walls. As the wrath of God poured down from the sky, flashes and thunder filled the room.

Helpless, the three heads screamed in agony as it was charcoaled and erased by the superlative magic that lasted more than 10 seconds.

Like always, Yue collapsed into a sitting position after using that strong of a spell. She was breathing heavily at her magical exhaustion and in her expressionless face was her eyes that conveyed satisfaction; she gave Hajime a thumbs up to show her satisfaction. Hajime returned the gesture with his own thumbs up and smiled. He began to walk while he carried the rifle on his shoulder. The remaining parts of the Hydra was to the rear of him now that he made his way to Yue.

Just after that.

“Hajime!”

Yue’s desperate voice sounded out. When he considered what was up, he followed her line of sight. There in the Hydra’s remains rose a seventh head that glared at him. Hajime stiffens unintentionally.

However, the seventh silver head, shifted its gaze to Yue and it let loose an aurora without any preparations. Like the Schlagen shot, the aurora shot towards Yue in an instant. She couldn’t move because of magic exhaustion.

The moment the silver head turned to Yue, Hajime had jumped out as his body was attacked by chills.

Just like with the blue head earlier, Hajime was able to jump into the line of fire to save Yue. This time the results were different. The aurora was swallowing Hajime whole. Yue’s body was blown away by the aftereffect of the hit, even if it wasn’t a direct hit.

Soon the aurora calmed down, and Yue sat herself up as her whole body was in pain. She searched for the figure of Hajime, as he had been swallowed by the aurora after he forced his way through to take the attack.

Hajime had not moved from the place he blocked the attack. He was in an imposing stance as smoke blew from his whole body. On

the floor was the wreckage of the melted Schlagen.

“H-Hajime?”

“…”

He did not answer. His body just shook and fell forward.

“Hajime!”

Yue quickly rushed over to him, ignoring her aching body as she is driven by uneasiness. Because of her magic drain, she couldn’t gather any strength and fell. With a suppressed impatient feeling, she took out her sacred water and drank. Her vitality returned slowly and she rushed to Hajime this time.

Blood gradually begins to puddle under Hajime’s stomach. The attack had penetrated Hajime’s “Vajra” and did a lot of damage. If he had not used the Schlagen as a shield, he most likely would have died. Luckily, his Schlagen was a weapon made from the shell of the scorpion that endured Yue’s “Azure Sky”.

When she turned him on his back, Hajime’s condition was severe. His fingers, shoulder, and flank was burned and festering. Some of the parts even had bone exposed. The right side of his face was burned and his right eye was bleeding. There was not much damage to his legs, it was a blessing in disguise.

Yue was going to give him sacred water, but the Hydra wasn't going to allow that. The beast was shooting innumerable balls of light, 10 cm in diameter, this time. Its intensity could be comparable to a gatling gun.

She quickly held Hajime and exerted all her strength to hide behind the pillars. Balls of light was shot one after another at the pillars, and causing the pillars to be shaved. It would not last even 1 more minute. Each of the light ball was loaded with terrifying energy.

Yue quickly dropped the sacred water into Hajime's wound, and tried to get him to drink another one. However, Hajime didn't have the power to swallow it, so he choked on it and spit some out. To get Hajime to drink it, Yue placed it in her mouth and kissed him. She forcibly made him drink it.

But the sacred water was not able to restore the wounds. Usually, the restoration began immediately, it seems like something was inhibiting it.

"Why!?"

Yue took out all the sacred water on hand as she began to panic.

The factor that was inhibiting the restoration was Hydra's poison in the aurora; the poison melt the flesh. It usually would have melted a being without resistance. However, the sacred water's restoration

was faster than the dissolution speed of the poison. The speed was slow but with Hajime's enhanced body it would just take time to heal, but the right eye had evaporated with the auroral light. He would not be able to get it back because the sacred water could only restore, not regenerate.

Soon the pillar will be crushed, and it did not seem Hajime will be able to move until then. Yue stares at Hajime with a determined expression as she kissed him. She took Donner and stood up.

"…This time, I'll save you…"

After her words of determination, she jumped out from behind the pillar. She only had a little magic and the sacred water was used up. With the body of a vampire that relied on body strengthening, she could only use Donner and her unreliable "Auto Regen".

The silver head glares at the Yue that had jumped out of the pillar it was bombarding. Since her magic reserve was low, she did not choose to fight it with magic. Instead she chose to dodging and run because she couldn't fire Donner like Hajime. Originally, Yue was not good with close quarter combat. Instantly she was driven into a corner.

Finally, one of the balls hit Yue in the shoulder.

"Agu!"

Groaning in pain, she endured it and resumed her running after retaining her momentum. The moment she stopped because of the pain, would be the time she collapsed. Her “Auto Regen” began, but it was slower than usual. Seems the poison was even effective against her regen. The vampiress’ magic reverse is cut again. In this situation, the magical power used to enforce her body will disappear soon.

Yue tried to approach it but the density of the barrage prevents her. She wouldn’t be able to shoot Donner if she couldn’t get closer. A plan was needed to close the distance between her and the beast. However, the barrage was merciless and it finally cornered her.

In desperation, she pulled Donner’s trigger to try to break the situation. Yue used a lightning spell to substitute the need for “Lightning Clad” acceleration. Count it as beginner’s luck, the bullet went through the gaps of the barrage to hit the silver head’s temple.

But,

“Eh”

Her voice leaked unintentionally. The blow should have some power even if she didn’t have sufficient acceleration, but the silver head did not suffer much damage. Shadows of despair fell over her expression, but her defeat meant Hajime’s death. She grit her teeth and prepared to evade again.

However, such a pattern couldn’t continue on forever. The silver

head's eyes shined and another aurora was shot that jarred the surrounding space. Yue's evasion route was limited by the light ball barrage so she choose to get blown away by jumping into the light bullets. This allowed her to avoid the aurora.

The price for that was a light bullet to the abdomen and a slam into the ground.

"Uu…Uu…"

Her body couldn't move. If she didn't move, a barrage of light bullets was going to hit her. Yue knew this and struggled desperately, but her body doesn't listen. Her regeneration was too slow. She started to shed tears, unawared. It was mortifying, so unavoidably mortifying. Can she not protect Hajime by herself?

After the head had confirmed its victory over Yue, it roared and shot its bullets of light.

The bullets of light approached Yue, but she did not close her eyes. To show that at least it hadn't defeated her heart, she glared at the head. Soon, her whole vision was being taken by the flash from the bullet. If it hit directly, it was death. She tried to apologize to Hajime for failing to protect him, as she said that she would go first.

An instant…a gust of wind blew.

“Eh?”

Yue realized that she was in someone’s arms and the bullet stuck to the side. When she looked at the person, she couldn’t believe her sight. It was unmistakably Hajime. He was breathing heavily from his wounds and one of his eyes was shut, but he gave Yue a tight hug.

“Don’t cry, Yue. It’s your win.”

“Hajime!”

She embraced Hajime filled with emotions. Most of his injuries had not healed. He was standing with pure willpower.

Hajime gazed at the silver head. The head glared back while making a bullet of light float in the surrounding. It threw the bullet so there would be no more discussion about who escaped death.

“So slow…”

Hajime did not move until the last moment, he fell down and evaded the bullet.

The head narrow its eyes and started to attack with numerous light balls.

“Hajime, run away!”

Yue told Hajime with a desperate expression, but Hajime was indifferent. He even embraced and danced rotations with Yue. They unsteady fell and avoided the bullets of light. When a light ball avoided Hajime, she seemed to have misunderstood.

She widen her eyes.

“Yue, suck my blood.”

His silent eye and quiet voice urged her. Even normally, she hesitated to take his blood. While dodging the light bullets, Hajime embraced Yue and exposed his nape.

“Your magic is the last resort…Do it, Yue. We will win.”

“…Okay!”

His strong words dwell within her, and she nodded. She believed in him and buried her face into his nape with her fangs. Yue’s body is rapidly healed when Hajime’s power flowed into her. The two of them were dancing around and avoiding the light bullet storm, while they embraced each other.

Now, the world grew dull in color from his view. In the world of the monochrome, all things moved slowly. Only Hajime was moving as usual.

Hajime looked. The scene of Yue fighting by herself while his wavering consciousness tried to hold on. She was fighting desperately with his gun in one of her hands. When she fell on the ground and the beast started to emit the aurora to finish her off.

Fierce anger filled Hajime. What does he have to do? Would he be satisfied just sleeping here? To permit such unreasonableness to take his partner in such a place? Was he going to yield to such a beast?

Nay! Absolutely not! An enemy threatening his, no, their survival! The enemy,

“Kill!”

At that moment, Hajime felt a spark run through his head and awaken one of his skills. The final derivation of “Divine Step”, [Light Speed]. By expanding the cognitive functions, it increased the efficiency of all the skill associated with “Divine Step” dramatically. Hajime has once again, “exceeded the wall”.

Hajime arrives next to Yue in an instant with this skill and gently dodged the bullets of light.

Eventually, Yue finished sucking his blood and completely regained her powers.

“Yue, when I give the signal, cast “Azure Sky”. Until then, put your heart and soul into evading.

“Okay…and Hajime?”

“Me, spadework.”

Hajime dropped Yue off behind the pillars and ran towards the silver head.

He dodges the incoming barrage of light and fires off Donner while using “Flicker”. The beast wasn’t able to stomach being hit again by the bullet so it dodged them. Bullets from Donner end up making holes in the ceiling.

Hajime kept changing the area he shot at, but all the bullets only made holes in the surroundings. A sneerful glint was in the silver head’s eyes. Yue was becoming uneasy but she believed in him. She waited for the signal to cast her spell.

He jumped into the air with “Air Walk” and fired off Donner. His delicate steps became possible which had not been possible in the match. Hajime jumped around in the air near the ceiling, dodging the barrage.

Irritated, the silver head gave off an aurora attack carelessly. Naturally, Hajime dodged it easily with a grin. Hajime had fathomed. The head became stiff while it did its aurora attack. Then he reloaded Donner and shot at 6 different places. An intense explosion and shock occurred on the ceiling. After an instant of silence, it began to collapse in one go. The debris was 10 m in diameter and weighed dozens of tons. That large mass crushed into the silver head.

Hajime opens a hole in the ceiling with Donner, and prepared a grenade while he evaded. He made parts of the ceiling fragile with his transmutation. Then he shot at the 6 places and it exploded.

His attack did not slack. If just simple debris could defeat this monster, he wouldn't have that much trouble. Hajime approached the trapped and crushed silver head with "Flicker". Using his transmutation, Hajime quickly changed the debris into restraints. At the same time, he created an impromptu blast furnace around the Hydra. He threw pouches containing incendiary grenades into the furnace and shouted.

"Yue!"

"Okay! "Azure Sky"!"

A pale sun appears in the blast furnace and melts the silver head that was restrained. There was a chain explosion inside, the power broke through its defense and the silver head suffered not negligible damage.

“Guuruaaa!!”

The death throes of the silver head. It tried to violently run away and shoots off the light bullets randomly. Walls started to break but Hajime was there to repair them to prevent its escape. Hydra tried to use its aurora attack but the silver head melted in the high heat and was unable to shoot it.

Hajime’s perception could not longer sense the hydra, as it disappeared from his senses. This time he was convinced of its death and collapsed backwards.

“Hajime!”

Yue crawled to him as her body had lost the ability to gather energy.

“Indeed…I’m spent…”

Hajime parted from consciousness slowly as he felt Yue embracing him.

Arifureta: Volume 3 Chapter 2

Abode of Traitors

Hajime felt his whole body being wrapped by something warm and soft. It was a very nostalgic feeling. This is the feeling of a bed. A cushion was gently catching his head and back. The softness of feathers wrapped his body. His dozing consciousness was thrown into confusion.

(What is this? This is supposed to be the dungeon…Why is a bed…)

He was fumbling around as his consciousness was not fully awake yet. However, he couldn't move his right hand. It was wrapped in a soft feeling that was different from the bed. His palm was also wedged into something warm and soft.

(What's this?)

Hajime moves his hand while he was still blank. He felt a certain elasticity between his hands and it was squishy when he touched it. Just keen on the feel somehow and it becomes a habit to keep touching…

"…Ahn.."

(!?)

For some reason a seductive gasp could be heard. At that moment, the first visage of his consciousness came back to him.

Hajime noticed as he raised himself in panic, that he really was in a bed. The bed had a pure-white sheet and it felt luxurious and it even had a canopy. It seems the bed was on a stone pavement in a terrace atrium. A refreshing breeze blew by Hajime's cheeks and the canopy. His perimeter was surrounded by pillars and a thin curtain. Can you imagine a bed in the center of a Parthenon shrine? The whole space was filled with a warm light that he hasn't seen in a long time.

He was confused, just a while ago he was in a desperate struggle fighting against the Hydra in the dungeon.

(Where is this? This place…don't tell me its the afterworld…)

In this place that felt so solemn, an ominous thought crossed his mind. Hajime thoughts were interrupted by an amorous voice next to him.

"…Hn…Hajime…Au…"

"!?"

When Hajime was confused, he turned over the sheet. While not wearing a single thread of clothing, Yue clinged onto Hajime's right hand and slept completely naked. He finally noticed that even he was naked.

"Indeed…is this the morning chirp…that's not right!"

The confused Hajime did a Tsukkomi on himself for his stupid thoughts. Yue started to wake up a little.

"Yue, wake up. Yue."

"Hn~…"

When he tried to wake her up, she curled up and shook her head to fret. His right hands were between Yue's thighs and it was approaching a dangerous place.

"Ku…Don't tell me this is really the afterworld…is it Heaven?"

Hajime he was saying those stupid things, he tried to free his right hand, but everytime…

"…Hn…Hn…"

Yue panted seductively.

“Ku, calm down me. No matter how old she is, her appearance is still of a child. Impossible for me to get excited! I am absolutely not a lolicon!”

Hajime tried to persuade himself of this, while his expression was on the brink of looking like a pervert. He gave up trying to free his right hand, and instead tried to wake up the cause but no luck.

Gradually, he started to get irritated. Hajime could not swallow the situation and confusion, and he had a blue vein popping out on his forehead at her leisurely sleeping there.

His irritation culminated…

“That’s enough, get up! This natural erotic vampire princess!”

He invoked his “Lightning Clad”. Electric discharge started to gather in his right hand.

“!? Abababababaaa”

Yue was shocked by the discharge. She released Hajime’s arm and finally opened her eyes, while she twitched a little.

“…Hajime?”

“Yeah. It’s Hajime-san. Sleepyhead, wake up…”

“Hajime!”

“!?”

She woke up and widened her eyes when she saw Hajime. The next moment, she jumped towards Hajime. In the nude. Hajime trembled.

Yue buried her face into Hajime’s scruff. and he noticed she was sniffing. He decided there was no helping it, and just stroke her head with a smile.

“My bad, seems like I worried you a lot.”

“Yeah…I was worried…”

It seems she didn’t want to stop clinging for a while. He let her do it until she was satisfied because she did take care of him. Hajime continued to stroke her head gently.

When Yue calmed down after a few minutes, Hajime asked about

what happened. By the way, he made Yue cover herself with the sheet.

“So, what happened since then? Where is this?”

“…After that…”

She said that after the battle, she felt dizzy from her magic depletion and snuggle right next to the collapsed Hajime. Then the double doors in the room automatically opened. Reinforcements? Yue stayed vigilant but nothing ever came. When she started to recover bit by bit, she decided to enter the door.

The sacred water was healing Hajime little by little. Still, he was in a dangerous state with all his serious injuries. His tough body had escaped death, but she didn’t know when the sacred water would lose to the poison. Both of them would be finished if a new monster appeared. Therefore, she had to check it out.

And in the depths of the door,

“…Abode of the Traitors.”

Inside was a vast space with a good looking house in the center. Then, she confirmed it wasn’t dangerous. Yue confirmed there was a bedroom and took the unconscious Hajime to it and nursed him. Recently, the God’s Crystal extract was decreasing considerably. Hajime had kept drinking the sacred water.

The sacred water finally beat out the toxins, and it was able to display its usual restorative prowess. Yue became exhausted eventually.

“…I see, you took care of me. Thanks, Yue.”

“Hn!”

When Hajime conveyed his words of thanks, Yue’s eyes brighten up joyfully from the bottom of her heart. She was expressionless but her eyes said all.

“By the way…why am I naked?”

He was curious. The morning chirp he wanted to break from. Hajime didn’t dislike Yue…he just wanted to prepare his heart. Inwardly, he just muttered to himself.

“…You were dirty…I cleaned you…”

“…Why did you lick your lips?”

Yue had a bewitching smile, like when she sucked his blood, and licked her lips. For some reason his body shivered.

“Why was Yue sleeping next to me? Also…naked…”

“…Fufu…”

“Wait, what are you laughing at? Did you do something? Don’t lick your lips!”

While Hajime was questioning her intensely, Yue did not answered and just stared at Hajime with a voluptuous look.

Hajime questioned for a while, but she had a happy expression as she remained quiet. He decided to give up on the questioning and explore the abode. Yue handed him some high-quality clothes she found. It was men’s clothing. Most likely it was the traitor’s. Hajime confirmed his good health then dressed himself with the clothes, and prepared his equipment. There might be some traps or tricks, so he prepared himself just in case.

When his preparation was also complete, he looked back and found Yue dressed. Yue was,

…she was in a one piece cutter shirt.

“Yue..what are you aiming for?”

“?…Size doesn’t fit.”

Oh, men’s size would surely not fit Yue’s height of only 140 cm. However, her appropriate sized breasts and pure white legs were on display. Her image was so sensational, contrary to her childish appearance, because of the way Yue held herself and acted. Hajime was troubled on where to keep his eyes.

“…If its natural, then its quite frightening…”

He wasn’t sure if she was aiming for that or it just came natural. Hajime just knew she was terrifying in a variety of ways.

Leaving the bedroom, he was amazed at the sights around him.

First, sunlight had entered his eye. It wasn’t real because they were underground. There was a globe that had its cone-shaped body connected to the ceiling, and it was floating there shining. He felt slightly warm because it didn’t feel artificial like a fluorescent lights. Hajime unintentionally called it “Sun”.

“…It becomes like a moon when its night.”

“Seriously…”

Next, the pleasing sounds of water entered his ears. To the back of the room was a door that lead to a small sized stadium. In the back

wall of this room was a waterfall. A large quantity of water ran down that wall from the ceiling and joined the river to flow into the back cave. The cool wind full of negative ions that blew from the waterfall provided a good feeling. When he took a closer look at the water, there were fish swimming there. Possible the fish flowed in from a terrestrial river.

Some distance from the river, there was a big field. Nothing seems to be planted there right now…it spread throughout the surrounding. It could be an animal pen. There was no sign of animals, but there was resources here to be self sufficient. Lots of varieties of plants grew around here too.

Hajime was on the opposite side of the river and field. He was encouraged to walk towards the adjacent building to the bedroom. The construction felt like processed rocked and it wasn't for dwelling.

"…I checked around a bit, there were many rooms that didn't open.."

"I see…Yue, don't let your guard down."

"Okay…"

The stone house was white and it texture was like lime; All of it felt so clean. In the entrance, there was a light sphere that was at the tip of a pedestal projecting from the ceiling. Hajime was dazzled with it because he had been in the dark for so long. There seemed to be 3 stories, and there seemed to be an atrium at the top.

First, they wanted to look at the ground floor. They discovered a fireplace, soft carpet, living area with a sofa, a kitchen, and restroom. No signs pointed to the idea that these items had been neglected for years. There was no sign of life…but it had the feeling of return home after a trip. Hajime thought it had an air that told him it hadn't been used in a while. People did not live here, but it was still being maintained…

Hajime and Yue continued their exploration with caution. When they went into the interior they were outdoors again. There was a hole in this huge place, and a sculpture of a lion was enshrined in deep water there. Next to the sculpture was a magic formation. When he poured magic into the formation, warm water jumped out of the lion's open mouth. The lion seemed to be able to arrange water from anywhere in the world.

"A bath. This is good. How many months has it been since I had a bath?"

He loosens his cheeks instinctively. The first time around, Hajime did not care about the dirt that was on his body. Since he was worried about itching, he gave in. Water was gathered using a huge magic formation he craved and he wiped his body with the water.

However, Hajime was Japanese. He was no exception to the addiction for a bath. After he secured the area, he couldn't help himself from smiling.

Watching that Hajime, Yue said…

“…Enter? Together…”

“…Let me take it easy alone.”

“Mu…”

Yue kicked the warm water with her barefeet. Hajime refused because if they entered together he wouldn’t be able to relax. Her face showed how dissatisfied she was.

Both of them soon discovered a study room and workshop on the second floor. However, there seemed to be seals that prevent the opening of the doors in those rooms. With no other choice, they continued their search.

The two headed to the third floor’s back room. There was only one room on the third floor. When they opened the door into the interior, there was a 7-8 m wide exquisite and delicate magic formation engraved on the floor in the center of the room; the design was something they had never seen before. A rather splendid geometrical patterned formation and it looked like art.

However, something else was more noteworthy. On the other side of the magic formation was a figure sitting in a regal chair. The figure was a corpse. It was already been skeletonized and there was a stunning black robe embroidered with gold on its body. There was not a single stain on it and it seemed to be an object from a haunted house.

The corpse hung its head, while leaning on the chair. It had been decayed in that posture. What did this person think of in this room with only a magic formation? Why did it choose this place, instead of the bedroom or living room?

"…Suspicious…What do you want to do?"

Yue was also wondering about the corpse. This person was probably one of the traitors. No signs of suffering could be seen on the figure that rested on the chair. It seemed like the figure was waiting for someone.

"Well, if we want to reach the surface, I think this room is the key. The seals in the library and studio resisted my transmutation…so we have to investigate. Yue wait here, and if anything happens I'll leave it to you."

"Okay…Be careful."

Hajime stepped forward towards the magic formation. The moment he stepped into the center of the magic formation, a snow-white light flashes suddenly and the room is dyed with the light.

Due to the intensity, Hajime closed his eye. Something invaded into his head immediately after, and he went through the time he fell into the abyss like a revolving lantern.

The light soon settled and Hajime opened his eyes; in front of his eyes…was a young man in black clothing.

Arifureta: Volume 3 Chapter 3

True History

The magic formation shines faintly and fills the room with a mysterious light.

A young man was standing in front of Hajime, and if they looked closely the man was wearing the same robe as the corpse on the chair.

“You have arrived here after overcoming the trials. My name is Oscar Orcus. The person who created this dungeon. If I said one of the Traitors, would you understand?”

Seems like the person speaking was Oscar Orcus. The creator of the “Orcus Dungeon”. Hajime was surprised but kept listening.

“Ah, please don’t ask questions. This is just a recording, unfortunately, it wouldn’t be able to answer your questions. For the person to reach this place, I will impart the truth of the world and what we fought for…this is the leftover message. I took this shape. Please I want you to listen…We are traitors but we are also not.”

Then Orcus started his story. This story was much different from the known history that the church taught and what Yue explained to him; it shocked him.

A tale of the battle between the Mad God and his descendants.

During the first years after the Age of Gods, the world was filled with strife. Humans, Devils, and Demi-Humans were constantly at war with each other. The reason for their wars varies. Territorial expansion, ethnic values, greed, and much others. The biggest reason was “Enemy of God”. During that time the races and countries were finely divided. Each of the race and country would worship their own god. For their god’s oracle, they continued to wage their war.

After hundreds of years of countless battles, but there came people who wanted to end this war. The group was called “Liberators” during those days.

They all had a common connection. All of them were direct descendants of the gods that were followed in the Age of Gods. The leader of the “Liberators” had, by chance, found out the real intentions of the gods. The gods had urged the wars with the intention of having the people be the pieces in their war game. When he found this out, the leader set out on a mission. He gathered like minded people who would not stand for the gods manipulating the people and driving them to war for their games.

They located the place where the gods resided, “World of God”. There were 8 of them that had the strength of ancestral times in “Liberators”, and with their powerful strength challenged the gods.

However, the plan fails before the fighting began. The gods were the puppet masters of the people, and they had gotten people to

recognize the “Liberators” as the enemy of god that wanted to bring destruction to the world. People were made to be their enemies. There were complications in the process, after all, they couldn’t wield their power against the people they were trying to protect. When the “Liberators” were defeated they were labeled as “Traitors”, the traitors who forgot the grace of god and wanted to destroy the world.

At the end, their group had been dwindled to the 8 strongest. They were now the world’s enemies and they judged that they were not strong enough to strike down the gods. Each of them scattered around the continent and created the 8 Great Dungeon to hide in. The dungeon was a trial to find a worthy person to hand over their powers, and with it accomplish what they could not.

Orcus smiles gently after he finished that long story.

“I don’t know who you are or what reason you arrived here for. I will not coerce you into killing God. However, I wanted you to know. What we stood for.

…To you, I grant my powers. You are free to use it as you will.

Please do not use this power to satisfy the evil in your heart.

Our conversation is at an end. Thank you for listening. Now your free will won’t be under supervision.”

After he finished what he said, the recorded image of Orcus disappeared. Something invaded Hajime's mind at the same time. His mind ached with a throb, but endured it quietly because it imprinted knowledge of a certain magic.

Soon, both the pain and magic formation settled. Hajime slowly exhaled.

"Hajime…are you okay?"

"Ah, I'm fine…kind of. I just heard something immense."

"…Okay…What do you want to do?"

Yue asked what he wanted to do, after he heard Orcus' story.

"Yeah? Nothing in particular? Being summoned without permission and asking them to fight a war was bothersome. I don't even know what's going on with this world. Looking for a way to the surface and going home. That's my only goal…Are you bothered by it, Yue?"

The previous Hajime would probably do something. However, his values had changed and it allowed him to ignore Orcus' plight. This world should have its own people deal with their problems, but Yue was as resident of this world. Since he couldn't leave her alone, he had to consider what she wanted. He couldn't cut off Yue like he did Orcus because their relationship was a lot closer.

Hajime asked her for her thought, but after a slight hesitation she shook her head.

“My place is here…others I don’t care.”

She snuggled up to Hajime and took his hand. Yue tried to convey her true feelings as she grasped his hand. In the past, she devoted everything for her country. Betrayed by those she trusted and not a single person saved her. For Yue after her long imprisonment, this world was just a prison to her.

Hajime was the one to save her from her prison. That is why being beside Hajime was her everything.

“…Is that so.”

Hajime was slightly embarrassed. He cleared his throat to disguise it, and tells the shocking truth without hesitation.

“Ah, I also learned some new magic…Age of Gods magic it seems.”

“…Really?”

Yue had an expression that said she didn’t believe him, but it was expected. The magic used in the Age of Gods were lost to the modern world. It was transition magic that summoned him and the others here, and that was an Age of Gods magic.

“This magic formation on the floor can fiddle with your brain and teach you to use it. It seems like.”

“…Are you okay?”

“Yeah, no problem. This magic…seems like its the magic for me.”

“…What kind of magic?”

“Well, I think its called Creation Magic. You can add magic into minerals with it, and the added magic can give special properties to the minerals.”

Yue jaw-dropped at Hajime’s explanation.

“…You can make artifacts.”

“Ah, I can do that.”

Creation Magic was used to create artifacts during the Age of Gods. Like this magic was made for “Transmutation Master”. The truth was Orcus’ class was “Transmutation Master”.

“Why don’t you learn, Yue? Entering this magic square and it will explore your memories. Orcus said something about a trial and you may learn it if it judges that you passed the trial.”

“…I don’t use transmutation…”

“Mah, that’s true but…its magic from ancient times? It wouldn’t hurt to learn it?”

“…Okay…if Hajime says so.”

Yue walks to the center of the magic formation just like Hajime advised. The magic formation shines as it searches through Yue’s memories. Now the moment of truth of its verdict…

“You have arrived here after overcoming the trials. My name is Oscar…”

Orcus appeared again. There was a spoiled feeling. Hajime and Yue ignored Orcus’ story and kept talking to each other.

“Did you learn it?”

“Yeah. But…artifact is difficult.”

“Yeah, it seems that Ancient Magic might have affinities and suitability.”

While the two were talking with each other, near them was Orcus talking and smiling to nothing. It was very surreal. Hajime thought he saw the corpse look sad, but wrote it off as his imagination.

“Ah, for the time being, this place is ours now, do you want to tidy up the corpse.”

Hajime did not have any compassion.

“Un…fertilize the field…”

Yue also did not have any compassion.

Even though there was no wind, Orcus’ body hung its head.

Orcus’ body was buried at the end of the field, and a gravestone was erected there. As expected, treating him like fertilizer was too pitiful.

When they finished with the burial, Hajime and Yue went to the sealed rooms. They had received a ring that Orcus had worn. Don’t call them grave robbers. On the ring was an engraved pattern that was crosswise in the circle, and the pattern was the same as the seals in the library and studio.

First, they headed to the study.

Their first purpose was to search for a way to the surface. Hajime and Yue unlocked the seal on the bookshelf and checked it for anything notable. They discovered the designs for the whole dwelling. Although it wasn't to the degree of a blueprint, where what went, it was a memo of where certain buildings would be placed.

"Bingo! It has it, Yue!"

"Un"

A voice of delight escapes from Hajime. Yue is also joyful. According to the plan, the magic formation on the third floor was also connected somehow to a formation on the surface. The magic would not activate without Orcus' ring. Stea…Accepting that ring was a good idea.

When they examined the plan more, there was an independent golem in the studio that maintained this dwelling periodically. The light from the globes on the ceiling had the same property as natural sunlight. This meant that crops and other things that rely on sunlight could be grown. It seems the reason this place felt so clean, even when no life was here, was because of the golem.

The studio acted as a storage for all the artifacts and materials Orcus had made during his lifetime. These items were stole…

transferred to them. There were quite a lot of devices.

“Hajime…this.”

“Yeah?”

Yue had been investigating the other documents while Hajime checked the plans, and brought him one of the books. The book was Orcus’ memoir. Inside the memoirs were the written the daily lives of former comrades, especially about the 8 core members of the “Liberators”.

Within the passages, one of them was related with the Dungeons the other 7 made.

“…In other words, its that? If we conquer the other dungeons, we would obtain the creator’s Ancient magic?”

“…Maybe.”

According to the memoirs, just like Orcus, the other 7 “Liberators” were prepared to teach their Ancient Magic to those that conquer their dungeon and reach the final floor. Unfortunately the types of magic was not written…

“…Maybe we found a way home.”

Just as Yue said, there was a possibility. The transition magic that summoned beings from other world was an Ancient Magic.

“Looks like we have a guideline from now on. To conquer the 8 Great Dungeons when we return to the surface.”

“Yeah.”

Hajime loosen his cheeks as he got the guideline. He instinctively patted Yue’s head, and her eyes squinted joyfully.

They were looking for more information, but they weren’t able to find any data that showed the exact locations of the dungeon. Currently, the confirmed dungeons were “Mountain of Great Flames” around the Guruyuen Desert, and “Hartzena Sea of Trees”. The rumored dungeons were “Raisen Great Canyon” and “Schnee Snowfield”. They had no choice but to investigate all of them.

Satisfied with their search of the study, the two moved to the studio.

There were a lot of small rooms in the studio and they could open them all with Orcus’ ring. Inside them were various never seen before ores and work tools. Theory books crowded the area and it could be mistaken as a paradise for Transmutation Masters.

Hajime folded his arms and pondered as he looked over the studio. When Yue saw him in that state, she looked puzzled and voiced it.

"…What's up?"

After being lost in thought for a while, Hajime proposed to Yue.

"Umm, that is Yue. Can we stay here for a bit? I want to quickly get to the surface but…there are many things to learn and this is the best base. When thinking about conquering the other Dungeon, I want to prepare as much as possible here. How about it?"

Yue had been sealed underground for 300 years and she did not want to lose a second in getting to the surface. However, after becoming speechless at Hajime's proposal; she immediately approved. Strangely, it was Hajime who thought that…

"…Anywhere is fine if Hajime is there."

That's how it is. Hajime tried to hide his embarrassment at Yue's surprise declaration.

Both of them decided to train and equip themselves as much as possible here.

* * *

Omake

Evening of that day, the sun in the ceiling had changed into a moon and gave off a pale light. Hajime let his whole body relax as he soaked in the bath. After falling into the abyss, this was the first time he had loosened up. A bath was often said to cleanse the mind.

“Phew, this is the best.”

A voice that was unthinkable for the current Hajime’s nature came out. When he loosened his whole body, he suddenly heard footsteps. The completely off-guard Hajime shivered. Although he said he would enter alone!

Of course, the one to make the sounds and enter the bath was…

“…Ah…feels so good…”

Yue immediately sat down near Hajime, stark naked.

“…Yue-san, didn’t I say I’ll enter alone?”

“…I refused.”

“Wait a minute! I know that material!”

“…”

“…At least cover your front. There are plenty of towels.”

“Rather look.”

“…”

“…Eh.”

“…Ah, I’ve been hit.”

“…No you haven’t.”

“Why do you know that material? Fine, I’ll go!”

“I wont’ let you go!”

“Wa-Wait! Ah, Ahhhhh!!!”

I will leave the rest to your imagination.

* * *

Omake II [not related to story]

Kaori's side.

"What's this? Suddenly there is Killing Intent…"

"Kaori!? There is a Hannya behind you!"

Arifureta: Volume 3 Chapter 4

Departure

Two months have passed since Yue showed Hajime the dignity of a senior, and various breakthroughs were made from that night. As for Hajime, who continued enhancing his body and heart against the crazy monsters in the abyss, lost to Yue's onslaught. He decided to take it seriously and accept it.

Hajime was aware of Yue's feelings, on top of that he did promise to take her with him. His reason for withstanding her approach was his stance on not allowing something take his attention until he achieved his objectives. Now he had conquered the dungeon and established a secure base. His goal was partially achieved when he discovered information and a plan to return home, and now his mind was allow to think about other things. His fragile reason couldn't oppose Yue's approach. Moreover, his reason didn't exist anymore.

The two of them made full use of the base. If anyone saw from the side they would likely yell: "Riajuu should explode!!" everyday. Far away, a Hannya mask floated around a female student. Her best friend had been frequently frightened by the situation, but that's another story. These were the preparation for the bloodshed in the near future.

"…Hajime, does it feel good?"

“Yeah, feels good.”

“Fufu…Then, here?”

“Ah, that’s good too.”

“Better…I’ll make it feel even better.”

Currently, Yue was giving Hajime a massage. They weren’t doing anything erotic. Why were they doing a massage? Because of Hajime’s left arm. The massage was given on a regular basis to help his body get familiar with the prosthetic attached to his left arm.

His prosthetic arm is an artifact, and it could make like a real arm with the direct manipulation of magic. The arm had a pseudo neural mechanism, it allowed the touch sensation by using magic to send signals to the brain to perceive it. For its appearance, the arm had a silver luster with black lines running along it. In certain parts of the arm, there were magic formations and patterns engraved in it.

The arm was fitted with a large number of gimmicks. He had designed it similar to the items in the studio that were Orcus’ works, but Hajime added some of his original elements into it. A lot of special ores made with Creation Magic was used. If it was out in the world, this artifact would no doubt be an article of rare beauty that would be a national treasure. Of course, ordinary people couldn’t use it because you needed direct magic manipulation to operate it.

In two months their abilities and equipment were enhanced; they weren't anything like their previous selves. Hajime's current status.

Name	Nagumo Hajime		
Age	17 Years Old		
Gender	Male		
Class	Transmutation Artist (Synergist)		
Level	58		
HP	58,950		
MP	59,450		
Strength	2,450		
Defense	2,450		
Agility	2,450		
Magic Resistance	14,780		

Skills

- Transmutation
  - Mineral Appraisal
  - Precision Transmutation
  - Mineral Enquiry
  - Mineral Separation
  - Mineral Fusion
  - Replica Transmutation
  - Compression Transmutation
- Magic Manipulation
  - Magic Emission
  - Magic Compression
  - Remote Control
- Iron Stomach
- Lightning Clad
- Divine Step
  - Air Walk
  - Flicker
  - Grand Legs
  - Light Speed
- Air Claws

- Night Vision
- Far Vision
- Perception
    - Special Perception
- Magic Perception
    - Special Perception
- Heat Perception
    - Special Perception
- Hide Presence
    - Phantom Step
- Poison Resistance
- Paralysis Resistance
- Petrification Resistance
- Panic Resistance
- All Elemental Resistance
- Foresight
- Varja
- Grand Arm
- Coercion
- Telepathic Communication
- High-Speed Magic Recovery
- Magic Conversion
    - Vitality
    - Healing
- Limit Break
- Generation Magic
- Language Comprehension

Levels showed the current degree of growth and the limit was 100 for a person. However, did his body change so much after eating

too much demon flesh? The level stopped changing but his stats kept going up. Finally, it displayed those ??? for his level.

Hajime's growth after he consumed demon flesh was a very abnormal, if you think about his initial values and his growth rate. When his body went into its alteration it seems his growth limit also increased; just like his stats increased. He guessed that the Status Plate was no longer able to measure his limits.

By the way, the limit of Kouki's Hero class was 1500 for all stats. He could temporarily triple his stats with "Limit Break", but it still was ? of Hajime's stats. Moreover, Hajime could quintuple his stats with his skill and magic manipulation. You can understand how he is a cheat now.

For comparison, the normal humans of this world had stat limits of 100-200. If they had a class then it could be 300-400. The Devils and Demi-humans, depending on the tribe traits, could range from 300-600 as their limit. If a Hero was cheat, then Hajime was more or less a monster. This wasn't really a mistake because his body and mind had changed…

Let's introduce the new equipment.

First, Hajime obtained a useful device known as "Treasure Box".

This was a ring type artifact that Oscar kept. There was a 1 cm red jewelry attached to the ring, and this jewel could make a space where it could store items. In short, it was like a hero's tool bag. Hajime did not know the exact size of the space, but it was a

considerable size. There seemed to be free space still after putting in all the equipment, tools, and materials. Anything can be deposited or withdrawn by just pouring magic into the formation on the ring. Withdrawn items can be placed anywhere within a 1 m radius.

It is an extremely convenient artifact, especially useful for the one armed Hajime. If the ring could transport anything to any place than Hajime thought he could use it to reload. When the tested it, it was half a success. As expected, it did not have the precision to directly transfer the bullet into the magazine. The limit was the transfer had a certain range it could align the bullet's orientation. He might be able to use it when he became more skilled with the transmission.

Hajime decided to train to load a magazine with this transferring skill in the air. The important note is he was reloading in the air. Donner was a revolver that had a cylinder that swung out. Naturally, because the exposure of the cylinder was less than that of a top break revolver, it would require a superhuman technique to reload in the air. He wanted to use it in actual combat, not as a street performance, so it became more difficult. Hajime thought about remodeling it to a top break style but decided against it because it weakened the intensity in the trial.

After intense training for one month, Hajime had mastered this aerial reloading. Why was he able to master such a superhuman technique with just one month training? His secret was "Light Speed". This Special Magic had the ability to raise the user's cognitive functions. With this, he was able to slow the world down in his mind and aerial reloading became possible. There was a large burden to his body when he used it, so he couldn't use it for very long. However, it was perfectly fine to use it for his fast reloading.

Next, Hajime manufactured “Magic 2-Wheel Drive and 4-Wheel Drive”.

Literally, these were 2 and 4 wheels driven by magic. The two-wheel was an American type, and the four-wheel was designed like a military vehicle Hummer type. He used the tar shark resilience for the wheels because of its excellent elasticity. Tauru ore was the basis for all the parts. In the studio storage was Azantium Ore, at least that’s what Oscar’s book called it. Surfaces of the parts were coated with this ore, known as the world’s hardest ore. Even Donner’s maximum output probably wouldn’t be able to pierce through that durability. There was no complex structures like engines. The vehicle was driven by Hajime’s own magic or the magic stored in the fragment of God’s Crystal. Speed was proportional to the amount of magic.

In addition, there were devices fitted to the bottom of these two vehicles. When magic is poured into these devices, it will start to level the ground with transmutation magic. This would allow them to travel off-road in most places. Also, the vehicles were fully loaded like some spy car. Hajime was a boy. He was passionate about anything related to military. When he was too absorbed in it, Yue would pout. But her mood would improve when he spoiled her in various ways.

“Devil Eye” was another tool he developed.

Hajime lost his right eye when he fought the Hydra. His whole eye was evaporated by the heat of the Aurora attack, and he couldn’t get it back with sacred potion because he had lost it before he drank it. Yue was worried about it, so she devised and made “Devil

Eye”.

Even with Creation Magic, it was not possible to make a normal “eyeball”. However, using Creation Magic, she was able to apply “Magic Perception” and “Foresight” to the God’s Crystal. The Devil Eye was successfully created and it gave a very unusual but special sight.

Using the same pseudo nerves used in the artificial arm, the Devil Eye could send images to the brain to perceive. Devil eye did not grant normal vision. Instead, it could recognize the flow, strength and attribute of magic by color. He could see the core of the invoked magic.

What is the magic core? It is the thing that maintains and operates invoked magic…it seems. After invoking the magic, the magic is operated by the magic formation; he knew that. However, he had never thought about how the formula was linked with distant magic. None of the books and instructors had even mentioned anything about it. Probably it is a new discovery. Even Yue the magic expert didn’t know anything about it.

The normal “Magic Perception” was the same as “Perception”. It was only able to perceive a vague sense of number and location. Monsters that could hide their senses affected the effectiveness of the skills. With Devil Eye, he would be able to know what magic and how strong the magic the opponent is using. Hajime could even destroy the magic if he pierce the core of the magic. However, shooting it would be like putting a bullet through a pinhole; it would require a lot of accuracy.

God’s crystal was used because it could retain these magic better

than other materials. Hajime supposed that the reason was its ability to contain a vast amount of magic. Since he was still inexperienced with Creation Magic, he wasn't able to grant three or more magic. With the God's Crystal potential, they may be able to install many more magic into it when he is skilled enough; Hajime hoped.

Because they used the God's Crystal for the Devil Eye, it constantly gave off a pale light. Hajime's right eye constantly shined. There was no way to stop the glowing, so Hajime reluctantly put on a black eyepatch made of thin cloth.

White hair, artificial arm and an eyepatch. Hajime had completely became a Chuuni character. Calm down left arm! His figure seemed to say. When he saw himself in the mirror he despaired and entered an ORZ state. He stayed in bed for a whole day, and Yue tried to comfort him by various means…everyone didn't want to talk about it.

About new weapons, Schlagen was revived after its destruction by the Hydra. The gun was strengthened using Azantium ore. Since he no longer had to worry about carrying it, he lengthened the barrel to 3 m. A scope was created with "Far Sight" installed and attached to the gun. This increased its maximum effective range to 10 km.

Hajime remembered the struggle he had when he was chased by the horde of raptors. He developed a gatling railgun: Metsurai. Fires 30 mm caliber rounds at 12,000 rounds per minute through its 6 barrels. The barrels were created from special ores that had cooling effects installed by creation magic, but it still couldn't be used for more than 5 minutes continuously. If it overheats, it needs a 10 minute cooling period.

For surface supremacy, Hajime developed a rocket and missile launcher: Orca; purely because it was his interest. In the back was a 12-round rotary magazine for continuous fire, and it had an elongated barrel. He also had various kinds of rockets.

He even created another revolver to pair it with Donner: Schlag. Hajime could use both now that he had his artificial left arm. Using both at the same time, Hajime would be able to use Gun Kata as his basic tactics. With Yue as the typical rear guard, he considered close combat to efficiently cooperate with Yue. However, Hajime could be an all-rounder if he was properly equipped.

Other various equipment and tools were developed. However, contrary to being fully equipped, the God's Crystal was finally depleted of its sacred water. Only 12 tube containers were left of the sacred water. They tried to pour magic into the God's Crystal, but wasn't able to extract sacred water. Maybe after many years of concentration it would flow again.

Throwing away the God's Crystal would be a waste. It had saved his life…his lucky stone. Good luck piled up with good luck, he would be dead if he didn't arrive at this crystal. Hajime was extraordinarily attached to it because of that. Loneliness was unbearable to a survivor and painted a visage on his belonging. It was about the same as giving it a name and admiring it.

Hajime used the crystal's ability to contain enormous amount of magic; to make necklace, earrings, rings and other accessories with transmutation. He gave them to Yue. She was able to use very powerful magic. Her most powerful spells consumed a lot of magic, and just one shot would leave her depleted. If she was able to stock

up her magic in a battery, she could use those superlative magic in rapid succession and not get magically exhausted.

He named the accessories set “Magic Crystal Series” and gave it to Yue. Her reaction at that time…

“…Proposal.”

“Say What?”

Yue jumped at the first time hearing Hajime unintentionally using Kansai dialect with his Tsukkomi.

“It prevents magic exhaustion. I thought this would surely protect Yue from now on.”

“…It is a proposal.”

“No, that’s wrong. Just new equipment.”

“…Hajime, so shy.”

“…Recently, you’re not listening to people.”

“…Even shy in bed.”

“Will you stop!? Seriously, such a thing!”

“Hajime..”

“Ah, What is it?”

“Thanks…I love it.”

“Oh.”

Please, really explode already! These two were creating their own atmosphere. They were ready for everything in a lot of ways.

Ten days after that, Hajime and Yue were setting off for the surface.

While they were activating the magic on the third floor, Hajime told Yue in a quiet voice.

“Yue…My weapons, and our powers are heresy on the surface. The church and countries will not remain silent.”

“Nn…”

“They will demand our weapons and artifacts. There is a high possibility they will coerce us into participating in their war.”

“Nn…”

“This may be a dangerous trip that turns the world against us. No matter how many lives you have, it might be insufficient.”

“At this late of time…”

Hajime wryly smiled at her words. He gently stroke her fluffy hair, as she stared straight at him.

Yue squinted her eyes from the pleasant feeling. He took a moments pause, and stared back at the sparkling red eyes. Hajime put his wish and resolution into words, as he inscribed it into his soul.

“I will protect Yue, Yue will protect me. So we are the strongest. All will be mowed down, and we will cross worlds.”

At his words, Yue grasped both hands in front of the chest tightly; almost like a hug. Her expressionless face vanished to reveal a blooming smile. And answered like always,

“N~!”

Arifureta: Volume 3 Chapter 5

The Empire and the Heroes (Classmate Side 3 Part I)

We go back in time a little…

Around the time when Hajime defeated the Hydra in mortal combat, the party of heroes had temporarily aborted their dungeon clearing and returned to the Kingdom of Hairihi.

The clearing speed had fallen due to a lack of the comprehensive intelligence they had on the floors up till now, and also due to the strength and trickiness of the monsters. As such, intense member fatigue had resulted – the conclusion was to take a break and rest.

But though the rest town of Horuado would have been good for recuperation, someone was sent to meet them: they had to return to the palace. An envoy of the Hoelscher Empire had come wanting to meet with the heroes.

What was with this timing?

By nature, almost no time had passed between the arrival of the God Ehit's oracle and the summoning of Kouki and company. For this reason, the empire –which was an ally and did not itself conduct the hero summoning– would not be able to meet the heroes right after they were summoned.

However, it had been thought that the empire had not moved even after knowing of the heroes' summoning. This was because the empire had been founded 300 years ago by famous mercenaries, becoming a 'holy land' for adventures and sell-swords with its meritocratic system.

For them, talk of a group of heroes suddenly appearing and leading humanity was unconvincing. The Church was also in Hoelscher, and as such it was not an exception to having believers, but they were less devout than those in Hairihi. Most of its people were either mercenaries or were involved in the business, and as such there were more who valued profits over faith. If anything, this was just a story; it would hardly make earnest believers out of them.

Based on that, it was possible that they had made light of meeting up with Kouki and the rest just after their summoning. Of course, they were not against openly showing an obeisant attitude towards God in front of the church. While Haihiri would have been happy to patronize such a meeting, the empire –particularly His Imperial Majesty– had not been interested, and as such had not been involved.

However, the fact that this raid on the [Orcus Dungeon] had succeeded in breaking through the 65th floor, beating out the previous record, piqued the interest of the empire. So they sent word that they would like to meet, and both the church and Hairihi were quick to agree.

After this news was meticulously related to Kouki and company on the carriage, they arrived at the palace.

The carriage entered the palace, and upon their descent from it they saw a figure of a boy coming towards them. He was around ten, and had blonde hair and blue eyes. The atmosphere around him was similar to Kouki's, but which much more mischief in it. This was Randell S. B. Hairihi, Prince of the Kingdom. His air could be likened to that of a dog with flopping ears and wagging tail as he rushed up to them calling in a loud voice:

"Kaori! You made it back! I've been waiting!"

Of course, Kaori was not the only one there, for the returning expedition was present in full force. To them, it was easy to imagine what Randell's feelings were just by looking at his attitude – apart from Kaori he saw no one else.

In fact, Prince Randell had been making aggressive approaches towards Kaori since the day after they had been summoned. That said, he was only ten. In her view he could only be recognized as an emotionally attached child, and there was no sign of her feelings ripening beyond that. For a person as innately kind as her, he would be like a cute younger brother.

"It's been a while, Your Highness."

(TN: She says 'Randell-dono', but I'm the kind of translator who gets into hissy fits about putting random Japanese into my sentence when the English equivalent serves perfectly fine.)

The imaginary tail wagged furiously up and down at her small smile, as Randell instantly turned red. Despite that, he managed to make a masculine expression before making another ‘approach’ toward Kaori.

“Ah, it’s been a long time indeed. When you said you were going to the dungeon, I felt as though I had died. Were you hurt? If I was stronger, I would never let you do such a thing…”

Randell bit his lip in annoyance. Even though Kaori refused to only be protected, the heartwarming feelings of the boy still caused her cheeks to soften.

“Thank you for your concern. But I’m alright, you know? I wish to do this.”

“No, Kaori isn’t suited for fighting. Th, there should, you know, be safer things you can do.”

“Safer things?”

Kaori inclined her head at his words, and at this he turned an even deeper shade of red. Observing this amusing exchange from the side, Shizuku could only smile wryly as she considered the young man’s valiant ‘approach’.

“Mmhmm. For example, how about being a maid? You can work exclusively for me, starting today.”

“As a maid? I’m sorry, but I’m a healer…”

“T-then, going to the Medical Institute is fine too. There’s no need to go to dangerous places like the dungeons or the frontlines right?”

The Institute was a state-run hospital, situated right beside the royal palace. In short, Randell hated being apart from Kaori. However, the feelings of the young boy would not move Kaori’s obstinacy.

“No, I won’t be able to heal them immediately if I’m not on the frontlines. Thank you for worrying about me.”

“Uu…” Randell groaned softly, realizing that he could not move Kaori’s determination.

“Your Highness, Kaori is my precious childhood friend. As long as I am around, I will definitely continue to protect her!”

From Kouki’s viewpoint, he was being one-hundred-percent-beneficent in comforting a younger boy, but those were not the right words for that moment. In the eyes of the lovestruck Randell, this was translated as such:

“I won’t let my woman leave me. I definitely won’t hand Kaori over

to anybody!" (TN: The first bit is a bit dodgy, since my ability to recognize that variant on the kanji for 'hand' is currently failing me.)

The hero and the healer snuggling up intimately – that was a likely picture in his mind. His expression twisted in annoyance, Randell levelled a 'you are my mortal enemy' glare at Kouki. To him, they looked like lovers.

"What are you saying? You think nothing of sending Kaori into dangerous places. I won't lose to you! Kaori being with me is the better decision."

[T/N: Chauvinist pig, he uses the word kimatteiru, which indicates a decision without the target (Kaori's) individual input. i.e. "it has been decided" versus "I/you have decided"]

"Umm, well."

At the hostile words that Randell spoke, Kaori was at a loss and just smiled weakly, while Kouki was speechless. Shizuku, seeing Kouki like this, could only sigh.

Before Kouki could say anything more to aggravate the already growling, angered prince, a cool but authoritative voice rang out.

"Randell. Behave yourself. Can't you see Kaori is troubled?"

“B, big sister! …B, But!”

“No buts. Even though everyone is tired – to detain them in this place…who is it who isn’t thinking about others?”

“Ugh…B, but!”

“Randell?” (TN: I imagine she is projecting some kind of dark aura at him right about now.)

“E..errand! I remember, I had an errand to run! Excuse me!”

Refusing to admit his error, Randell turned on his heel and fled. Seeing his back fade from view, Princess Liliana spoke with a sigh.

“Kaori, Kouki-san, I’m sorry about my brother. My apologies on his behalf.”

Liliana lowered her head as she said that, causing her beautiful, straight blonde hair to flow downward.

“Mm, don’t worry about it, Lili. Prince Randell was just concerned.”

“I agree. Still, I don’t understand why he got angry…I didn’t say

anything rude that I had to apologize for."

Kaori and Kouki said this as Liliana smiled thinly. Understanding well the sibling love between an older sister and her younger brother, Kaori sympathized with Liliana to some extent for having a brother completely ignorant of her feelings. Above all, it was important that the 'mortal enemy' knew that she was separate from this matter.

By the way, the meetings between Randell and his 'mortal enemy' would cause a big stir…but that's another story.

Liliana was a talented lady of fourteen years. Golden haired and blued eyed, she was both beautiful and popular amongst the people. Earnest, but not too obstinate, and good at reading the mood, she was even able to interact openly with the servants.

She, as a princess and as a person, had been quite anxious as to the state of Kouki and the other summoned students. This was due to a sense of guilt about dragging them into problems of her world, which should have been their concern.

For that reason, she took the initiative to get to know the students, and it had not been long before they became well acquainted. She got along especially well with Shizuku and Kaori who were around the same age as her, by this point they had dropped all honorifics, electing to speak casually with one other and even giving each other nicknames.

"No, Kouki-san. There is no need to worry about Randell. He just

tends to be a bit reckless. More importantly…Once again, welcome back, everyone. I am heartily glad that you all returned safely."

Saying this, Liliana smiled gently. Even those classmates who were standing close to beauties like Kaori and Shizuku all blushed when they saw her smile. There was a refined elegance of royalty in her that the two of them did not have, something that most young women could not compete with using beauty alone.

In fact, Nagayama's group and the delinquent group were also crimson from having their hearts stolen; even female members were slightly dyed in the cheek. For ordinary modern day students, the aura of a bona fide Otherworldly Princess was too much. Those who could bear it, like Kaori and those already close to the princess, were abnormal in this regard.

"Thank you, Lili. Your smile has blown my fatigue away. I too am glad to see you," Kouki said such affected lines with a refreshing smile. Though it has been repeated often, Kouki did not have any ulterior motive in saying this. He was truly glad to be alive, and to meet a friend once again – he was just pathologically unaware of the effects his words and actions had.

"R, re, really? U, um…"

As a princess, Liliana was used to the compliments and flattery paid by the gentry, imperial envoys and the people of the cities and towns. As such, she had trained herself to become adept at looking past these masks and discerning their true intentions. Thus she could see that there was no such thing in Kouki's words. Unused to such experiences outside of her family, Liliana's cheeks too went red, and she became flustered and unable to respond.

Kouki, as usual, just continued laughing and smiling, not realizing at all the effects his behavior had. And as expected, this caused Shizuku to sigh deeply. Someone worrisome had taken the stage, and yet the person himself would resolutely fail to notice it.

“Um, anyway, thank you all for your hard work. Preparations for the meal and baths have already been completed, so please make yourselves at home. The imperial envoys will take a few more days to arrive, so you needn’t worry about that.”

Having recovered her balance, Liliana urged them thus.

While Kouki and the others were unwinding the fatigue accumulated in the dungeon, the groups who had stayed behind heard of Behemoth’s defeat, and jubilant shouts went out amongst them. After this, the number of people who returned to the frontline increased. Aiko-sensei’s title of “Goddess of Fertility” also became a topic at this point, which caused her to writhe quite a lot.

Kouki and the others slowly rested their bodies, which had been exhausted from the raid.

But inwardly Kaori was restless; she desired to return to the dungeon.

Arifureta: Volume 3 Chapter 6

The Empire and the Heroes (Classmate Side 3 Part II)

Continuing from the previous…

3 days later, the imperial envoys finally arrived.

Currently, Kouki, the dungeon clearing members, leaders of the kingdom, and a delegation of priests led by Ishtar were out in full force to receive the five envoys, who were standing in the middle of the red carpet opposite King Erihid (TN: is this his name?)

“It was good of you to come, sir envoys. Do well, therefore, to make certain of our heroes’ surpassing valour.”

“Your majesty, you have our thanks indeed for accepting this sudden request for an audience. That said…may we know the identity of the Hero?”

“Mm. We will introduce him first. Sir Kouki, would you step forward?”

“Yes.”

The unveiling of Kouki and the others followed immediately after

the formal salutations between the king and the messengers, with the King calling him to appear before them. Despite the fact that not even two months had passed, his look was utterly fearless, quite unlike when first summoned.

While they were not here, if the palace maids, noble ladies and Kouki's fans in the stay-behind group saw him now they would without a doubt start going red in the face and releasing heated sighs of fascination. Those who had made advances on Kouki already numbered in the double digits…but due to his extreme denseness, their approaches were just those of "warm and friendly people" to him. A naturally dense hero was walking the earth.

(TN: This is one of the things I think the author absolutely has to fix if this webnovel becomes an LN – these asides that are basically like 'wut, what, where?' moments in terms of plot. I know he's trying to funny, but still…)

After this the heroes were introduced, starting from Kouki.

"Oh, so you are the heroes. Quite young, I must say. Pardon my rudeness, but did you truly break through the 65th floor? If memory serves, a monster known as the Behemoth appears there…"

While scrutinizing Kouki, the messenger also took in Ishtar's open manner, and cast a suspicious gaze upon him. One of the envoy's bodyguards also looked the Hero up and down in an appraising manner.

Being discomfited by their gazes, Kouki answered them.

“Well, may I speak? As to whether we defeated it…ah, would you like to look at a map of the 66th floor?”

Kouki proposed various proofs, but the envoy shook his head and allowed a smile to drift onto his face.

“No, thank you. There is a quicker method than that. Would you have a mock battle with one of my guards? That way, I would be able to see your strength immediately, Sir Hero.”

“Well, I don’t mind, but…”

Kouki looked back at the king, slightly puzzled. Having caught that look, the king himself turned to Ishtar for his approval. He nodded. With Ehit’s authority behind him, it would have been an easy matter to convince the empire to accept Kouki as humanity’s leader, but a real battle was the quickest way to make the meritocratic empire truly recognize him as such.

“Very well. Sir Kouki, show them your strength as you desire.”

“It’s decided then. Well, we will impose upon you to prepare a location.”

So it was in this abrupt manner that the mock battle between the

hero and the envoy's bodyguard was decided.

Kouki's opponent could not be a more ordinary person. He was neither particularly tall nor short, bereft of any notable features, and had a face one could easily lose sight of in a crowd. At first blush, there was nothing "strong" about him at all.

He held his large edgeless sword downward casually – a stance that may as well not have been one at all.

Kouki was a little angered by this. He would give this person a taste of his spirit with the first blow, and make him devote himself seriously as well.

"Here I come!"

Kouki came in like the wind. His swift "High Speed Movement" narrowed the space between them at once as he swung his bamboo sword down with a powerful whipping sound. If this was an ordinary warrior, he would have had trouble even perceiving it. Of course, Kouki intended to stop just before hitting. But there was no point worrying about that. Rather, it was Kouki who was going to get a taste of 'proof' from the outcome.

CRACK!

"Guh!"

The one blown away was Kouki. The bodyguard readied his sword after that swing, glaring at him. At the instant where he had stopped his simulated attack and relaxed, his opponent had casually knocked his sword upward, causing him to be pushed back.

“Haaa…Hey, hey, hero, is that all you’ve got? Everything? What happened to your motivation?”

Rude words that ill-befit an ordinary face came from the bodyguard as his expression showed first astonishment, and then gave way to rising disappointment.

Indeed, Kouki had made such a casual thrust from the front because he had judged the bodyguard based on his appearance, and he had clearly been repulsed in his present state. Having come to a realization about himself due to this experience with his opponent, he was once again angry – but this time the anger was self-directed.

(TN: Not sure about this paragraph, because the author uses the term ‘composition’ for some reason that my lousy Japanese won’t let me perceive; I replace it therefore with ‘state’, which I can see fitting into the English)

“I’m sorry. Please take care of me once more.”

This time Kouki’s eyes were serious, even as he apologized for his

poor manners. Seeing him like this, the bodyguard made a displeased face and said,

“There are no ‘next times’ on the battlefield.”

Nonetheless, he resumed his natural stance, indicating that he would continue.

Letting out a battle cry, Kouki charged.

Enhanced by “High Speed Movement”, the bamboo blade swung diagonally down, upwards, and then forwards in a thrust. The swiftness was such that wavering afterimages were left behind in Kouki’s wake.

But even against such a storm of sword-blows, the guard seemed to dodge using only the bare minimum of movements, looking for a chance to counterattack. Even when he lost track of Kouki’s movements and was attacked in his blind spot, he could still fend the hero off.

The guard’s movements caused Kouki to remember something – Knight Captain Meld. There were already considerable differences in their specs, but so far he had been unable to surpass him in a mock battle. The reason for this was an overwhelming difference in combat experience.

Most likely, the guard was the same, having stood on many

battlefields before this one, and his combat experience could fill up the gap in their specs. In short, this person was on the same level as or even above Meld.

“Hmm. I guess at this level of physical ability an ordinary man wouldn’t be your match. Still, there’s something missing. You didn’t have any affinity for battle originally, right?”

“Huh? Um, yes, that’s true. I was a mere student at first.”

“And now you’re the ‘Apostle of God’, huh.”

Ishtar and his associates from the church snorted in displeasure at the guard.

“Hey, hero. Prepare yourself, I’ll be going at you from here on out. Don’t go easy on me, or you might get killed.”

So declaring, he charged. This charge was a not high speed movement on Kouki’s level. Instead, it felt almost slow…and yet,

“Tch?!”

As the guard approached his blade seemed to leap upwards from below, causing Kouki to retreat in alarm. But like an attracted magnet, the blade maintained the distance between them, moving in like a whip as it struck.

The sword's trajectory was irregular and the movements hard to perceive, and while the use of "Foresight" allowed him to momentarily put some distance between them, he was unable to fully break away. Even when he tried to used "High-Speed Movement" to break off in one go, his opponent would foresee it, and launch pre-emptive strikes such that he could not activate it. Gradually, impatience began to show on Kouki's face.

"Pierce, Wind Strike."

At the murmured aria a cluster of wind formed, and struck him squarely in the leg.

"Uwah?!"

Caught in mid-step, Kouki's leg swung outward and his balance was broken. In that instant, a fierce bloodlust pierced him. The guard's cold gaze met his, and he swung his blade downward with an unbelievable pressure.

He's going to kill me, Kouki suddenly realized. (TN: Well, we're slow aren't we?)

Indeed, the guard could not help but think this way. If Kouki could not keep up with his attacks, his intent was to kill him rather than allow a boy who knew nothing of killing to become humanity's leader. This would certainly invite censure from the likes of the church, but to put incompetent allies on the battlefield was much

harder to stomach. As such, this might be the better choice, or so he felt.

(TN: Another paragraph that I sucked at translating. I pray this is at least 50% accurate.)

But the swing would never happen.

BOOOOM

“Guh!?”

The exact same scenario occurred as it did previously, but this time it was the guard getting blown away. Bounding away several times with both hands to negate the momentum, the guard looked at Kouki. His whole body was emitting a pure white aura, and he swung his sword to face his opponent while taking up a stance.

At the moment when the guard let fall his blade, Kouki’s survival instincts had kicked in and activated his “Limit Break”. This technique caused all his parameters to multiply three times – a ‘technique for a pinch’ unique to a protagonist.

However, his face was hardly composed. Desperately repressed fear from being so close to death was in his expression as he held his sword.

Seeing this, the guard's fearless grin resurfaced.

"Hey, that's a slightly better face. Compared to that wimpy one from before, that is."

"Wimpy face? I'm frightened. Were you trying to kill me just now? Wasn't this a mock battle?"

"So what? Did you think that in a real battle, we'd just go "okay, it's over"? You'd end up dead like that. You're supposed to stand above us humans and lead us – are you even aware of that?"

"I'm aware…of course I will save everyone!"

"What can a kid who's afraid of getting hurt do? Someone who doesn't even have bloodlust in his sword shouldn't talk big. Well then, are you ready? I said it at the start…that you'll die if you go easy on me!"

Once again, the guard advanced, an abnormal feeling of bloodlust coming off him, putting pressure on Kouki, who gathered strength in his legs, his face twisting painfully as he did so.

But he did not charge. A barrier of light had fallen between him and Kouki.

"This much will do. At this rate, it'll stop being a mock battle and

become a killing duel instead. You have overstepped yourself with this joke, Lord Gahard."

"Tch, I've been found out. As shrewd as ever, old man."

Ishtar, having erected that shimmering barrier, proceeded to pour a wet blanket on "Lord Gahard" the guard, who cursed inaudibly in response, sheathed his sword in his shoulder-mounted scabbard, and took off his right earring.

The air around the guard turned a misty white, and when it finally cleared again, there appeared a totally different person.

It was a man who looked to be in his forties. His silver hair was cropped short, and his blue eyes were reminiscent of a wild wolf. His figure was slender but highly muscled, his clothes wrapping tightly around them almost to the point of bursting.

On seeing him, a commotion broke out.

"Lord Gahard!"

"Your Imperial Highness!"

Indeed, this man was Gahard D. Hoelscher, present Emperor of the Hoelscher Empire, in disguise. Seeing this, King Erihid furrowed his brows and asked:

“Just what were you intending, Emperor Gahard?”

“There, there, King Erihid. I apologize for not introducing myself. However, a little play-fighting was the quickest way for me to make sure. This is of great importance to our future battles. Please excuse my rudeness.”

Though Gahard excused himself this way, his expression was hardly apologetic. “Well, fine”, Erihid seemed to indicate with a sigh.

Kouki was totally stunned. Somehow, this emperor was kind of flighty, and his ‘surprises’ seemed to be treated as the norm too.

With that, the mock battle ended, and at the dinner that was arranged the empire gave their official words of recognition to the hero. For the time being, it seemed like the objectives of their visit had been met.

But that night, when a subordinate asked him about his real intentions in a room, the king gave a bothersome answer.

“Meh, he’s no use. Just a kid. A mouth that believes unswervingly in stuff like ideals and justice. His rash strength and charisma are a bad combination, and he’s the type who would get killed for his ideals. But we can’t neglect him since he’s the “Apostle of God”. All in all, he isn’t good.”

(TN: Take this paragraph with a healthy pinch of salt. My translation of these sentences is definitely iffy due to an overabundance of katana in colloquial use – which I am failing to grasp even with the dictionary.)

“So, you intended to kill him during that match?”

“What? No. I just thought I might fix his cowardly attitude with a beating. I wouldn’t have killed him even if the Pope hadn’t intervened.”

It seemed like the Emperor did not regard Kouki and the rest of the heroes to be worth his attention. This was not unreasonable. Up till a few months ago they had been mere students; in peaceful Japan no less. They did not have the readiness on the battlefield that a seasoned warrior would recognize.

“Well, the war with the demons may pick up the pace soon. We’ll see about it then. For now, let’s prioritize tactfully keeping ourselves from being involved with that kid…and to watch out for the Pope.”

“As you will.”

He had no intention to reveal his real estimation, however, and the very next day Kouki and the other heroes would see him off when he returned to his country; with his business finished, there was no reason to stay any longer. Indeed, he seemed a very flighty

Emperor.

By the way, there was an incident in which the emperor came across Shizuku during her morning training, and being pleased with her he requested rather earnestly that she become his lover. Upon her polite refusal, he just gave his usual plucky laugh and a “well, I’m not in a hurry” as his reply, indicating that this matter wasn’t of great importance to him. At that moment, he caught side of Kouki and laughed through his nose at him. Kouki for his part got the feeling that they would never get along, and was momentarily displeased by this.

It also goes without saying that Shizuku’s sighs increased.

Arifureta: Volume 3 Chapter 7

Raisen Gran Canyon and Miserable Rabbit

Their view was filled by the light from the magic circle, the air definitely felt different even though nothing could be seen. It's clearly different compared to the air from the depth of the hell, sensing the fresh air from somewhere, Hajime's cheeks are loosened.

The sight that came into view after the light settled was…

A cave.

"Say what?"

Without any further thought, Hajime who believed that the other side of the magic circle was the surface unintentionally inserted a tsukkomi at the scene which weren't any better. Honestly he was extremely disappointed.

Facing Yue who was tugging his shirt with a questioning face Yue told him her opinion in a comforting way.

"… A secret passage… …to be hidden is usual"

“A, ah, is that so? It certainly is. There is no way that the direct way to den of the rebels wouldn’t be hidden right”

To not realize something so simple, Hajime felt considerably ashamed. He pulls himself together while scratching his head. Without aid from the Green Light Stone, Hajime and Yue advanced through the pitch black cave without any problems.

On the way, though there were many doors with seals and traps, the Orcus Ring would react cancelling the activation altogether. The two of them were cautious at first, but soon lost interest as nothing had happened so far and continued to advance, till they finally found light. It’s the light from the surface. The light which Hajime for the past few month, and Yue for the past three hundred years sought for.

Hajime and Yue came to a stop when they saw it, looking at each other exchanging glance the both of them grinning, and simultaneously started to run toward the light that they yearned for.

As they approach the light which was gradually getting bigger, they could feel and breathe the air from the surface. It was different from the stagnant air from hell. The air was cool and fresh. Hajime had never felt as much as now how delicious the air was.

Thus, Hajime and Yue both jumped into the light… … and reached the long awaited surface.

To the humans who live above grounds, this pace was a hell, an execution ground. Below the cliff, magic could hardly be used, even so, a lot of powerful and brutal monster live there. An Average of 1-2 kilometre depth, and 900 meter width, extending 8 kilometre from [Guryuen Great Desert] on the west and [Harzena Sea of Trees] at the east, the great scar dividing the north-south of the continent, was how people call it.

“Raisen Grand Canyon”

Hajime and Yue were currently outside of the cave at the bottom of the Raisen Grand Canyon. Although they were at the bottom of the earth, the sun from above poured down bright and warm light. The fragrant of the surface mixed with the wind were tickling their nose.

Compared to any kind of place it could have been, this place was surely the surface. In a daze while looking at the sun above their head, Hajime and Yue’s facial expression gradually turned into smile. Even Yue, who was expressionless by default, could be seen smiling broadly by anyone who looked.

“…We are back aren’t we…?”

“…nn”

The two finally hit by an overwhelming happy feeling of reality, looked away from the sun, glanced at each other and with all their

strength started hugging each other.

“Yeaaaahhhh~~!! We are back, damnit~!”

“Hnn~~!!”

While hugging Yue who had a smaller stature, Hajime spun around. In that short while, an unsuitable laughing voice could be heard from the place that people called hell. On the way, even stumbling on the uneven ground felt excessively funny, both of them are chuckling and laughing.

At last, after the two laughter settled down, they were completely… … surrounded by monsters.

“Haa~ these guys are really dense aren’t they?… … If I remember correctly, we can’t use magic here right?”

Hajime tilt his head while pulling out Donner & Schlag. Hajime who had made an effort while studying knew that if this place really is Raisen Grand Canyon, then magic could not be used.

“… I know. However I will still do it, but using mere sheer strength.”

The reason that magic could not be used inside Raisen Grand Canyon was because the magic power that are loaded into the

magic that are invoked are disintegrating and dispersed. Of course Yue's magic was not an exception. But Yue who was once a Vampire Princess, in addition of the considerable magic power she have, she also possess an external magic tank which is the Magic Crystal Series.

In other word, Yue is saying something like she should just annihilate them before the big power got dispersed.

"By sheer power… How high is the efficiency?"

"…Around 10 percent."

It seems like, in order to use elementary magic, high class magic power are needed. The range too would be shortened a lot.

"A~ then I will do it, Yue just focus on defending yourself."

"Uu… …but"

"It's okay, the right person in the right place. This place is a bad place for magic user right? Just leave it to me."

"N… …okay."

Yue reluctantly withdraws. Even though they had reached the long awaited surface ground, it's hard to accept that she was excluded from the first battle. Her pride seems to have been a little damaged. Her lip was sulking from the displeasure.

Looking at Yue's sulking appearance, Hajime abruptly fired Donner while making a wry smile. Without looking at the other party's side, pointing the gun muzzle to the spontaneously gulping monsters, and spontaneously pulling the trigger.

Without realizing the much too sudden attack, the surrounding monster's head burst and scattered which resulted in dead without any resistance. There were only a gun's reverberation sound left in the vicinity, the monsters were frozen in place without understanding what exactly happened. Surely if 10% of magic can be used, even "Lightning Clad" could be used here. Then the rail gun could be launched without any trouble.

To the dumbfounded monsters, Hajime showed a bold smile.

"Now then, the monsters from hell compared with you guys, which one is stronger… …let me try it out."

Quickly taking Gun Kata stance, killing intent was filling Hajime's eyes. When the surrounding monsters saw those eyes they unconsciously took one step back. Even if they didn't notice it, their surely instinct felt it. That they had made, a 'monster' which they shouldn't oppose their enemy.

An ordinary person would have their consciousness gone just from

getting into the fierce pressure range, at last one monster which couldn't hold the tension anymore let out a roar and jump out.

"Graaaaa!!"

Bang!!

But, at the same time resounded a gunshot along with a straight flash line, rather than evading somewhere, that monster weren't even give any time to respond and got blown off.

The things that happened after that weren't even a fight anymore but a slaughter. The monsters weren't allowed to run away even one step farther, it's as if that it was natural that their head get blown off and their insides are exposed. There the monsters corpses were filling the view for as far as one can see in just five minutes.

Putting Donner and Schlag away in their respective holster beside his thigh, Hajime looked at the mountain of corpse in the surrounding while tilting his head a bit.

From behind, Yue approached with small steps.

"…What wrong?"

"No, it's just a little disappointing… …The monsters at Raisen Grand Canyon are famous for their brutality I almost thought that

this was a whole different place instead.”

“…Hajime is a ‘monster'”

“Cruel aren’t you. Well, it just means that the monsters in hell are just too strong.”

Hajime said that while shrugging his shoulder, and averted his eyes from the monster’s dead body as he had lost interest in it.

“Now then, for this cliff I think we can climb it… …what should we do? If we think of Raisen Grand Canyon, there should be one of the Seven Great Dungeon around here. After all this trouble, how about we head toward the sea of trees and do some search while we are at it?”

“…Why the sea of trees?”

“No, well, after getting out of the canyon, you don’t want to abruptly cross the dessert right? If it’s the sea of trees, there should also a village nearby.”

“…Certainly it is.”

Yue nodded to Hajime proposal. Looking at how weak the monsters were it seems like the Canyon itself can’t be counted as a dungeon. In that case, there should be an entrance to the dungeon

somewhere. If they used Hajime's "Air Walk" or Yue's Wind Magic, they could easily climb the cliff, but in whichever the case, there was the need to investigate the Raisen Grand Canyon, even more so there was no reason to oppose.

Hajime poured magic into the "Treasure Warehouse" on his middle finger, and took out a Magic Powered 2-Wheeled Drive from it. Straddling dashingly, Yue got on the vehicle horizontally and clung to Hajime's waist. Different from using Gasoline like on Earth, the vehicle use direct magic operation to directly move the parts that are connected to the wheel, so the engine was quiet like an electric automobile. Hajime thought that the Engine roaring sound would have felt more romantic, but he did not know other structure than using the simple structure, he could not reproduce the sound. By the way, the speed adjustment was dependent on the amount of the magic power poured in. Well, under normal circumstances, the magic power efficiency inside Raisen Grand Canyon was the worst, so it could not be used for a long time.

Raisen Grand Canyon was basically a cliff that extends straight from east to west. There was hardly any bypath therefore just by advancing along the way would lead them to sea of trees without getting lost. Hajime and Yue didn't have to worry about losing their way, carefully searching for the entrance of the dungeon, while casually traveling with the Magic Powered Two Wheeled Vehicle. Below the vehicle frame was installed a mechanism to level the bad road in the bottom of the cliff with transmutation as they advance, it truly was comfortable.

Though, in that mean time, Hajime hands had been restlessly continue moving, without even releasing the hand, Hajime kicked off the crowd of monsters who was trying to attack them.

A little while after driving the Magic Powered Two Wheeled Vehicle, a monster roar could be heard not that far from where they were. It was considerably powerful. At least it was one level higher compared to the monsters they had encountered inside the cliff. It seems like they would have to fight it within another 30 seconds.

Driving the Magic Powered Two Wheeled Vehicle around the protruding rocks, a large monster appeared. It was a Tyrano-like monster, though it had two heads. It's a double-headed Tyrannosaurus-like monster.

But the one getting attention wasn't the double-headed Tyrant, but the girl with rabbit ears jumping around repeatedly with half crying face.

Hajime stopped the Magic Powered 2-Wheeled Drive and look at the suspicious looking about to get eaten rabbit eared girl.

"… What is that?"

"… Rabbit Tribe?"

"Why is it in this place? Are the Rabbit Tribe this place inhabitant?"

"…Never heard of that"

“Then, isn’t it that? She was dropped here as a criminal? Isn’t this place also used as execution place?”

“…Bad rabbit?

Hajime and Yue inclining their head, while talking care freely about the rabbit eared girl. It seems like there was no will to help her. Particularly, from the fact that Raisen Grand Canyon was used as one of execution method, they weren’t even considering the fact that the rabbit eared girl might be a criminal. Rather than thinking of a complete stranger, they thought that it would be bothersome and didn’t have any real interest in doing it.

But as expected, the aftereffect of the change of mentality in the brutal way. And the circumstances were different compared with Yue. There was no sympathy felt toward the rabbit eared girl, even more there was no merit it didn’t even reach Hajime’s heart. If he always reacts to help request, there would be no end to it. The Hajime right now had already deserted the world itself.

However, it seems that the rabbit eared girl had detected the carefree Hajime and Yue. After getting blown off by the double headed Tyrant and fallen to the shade of a rock, hurriedly stood back up on her hands and feet’s to run away, in that pose she stare at Hajime.

And once again the double headed Tyrant swung it’s claw at the rock where she was hiding and blew it off, grumbling while rolling on the ground, she escaped from the fierce killing attack along with that momentum. … Toward Hajime place.

Though there was some distance between them, the desperate shout from the rabbit eared girl echoed through the canyon and reached Hajime place.

“Heelph me~e! Hii~~?I’m dying! I’m dyiiing! Help mee~, pleasee~!”

She ran desperately while the floods of tears were flowing on the soggy face. Right behind her was the approaching double headed Tyrant that wants to bite the rabbit eared girl. At this rate, the rabbit eared girl would be eaten even before she could reach Hajime place.

As one would expect, directly getting asked for help to this degree, even Hajime… …

“Uwa, that’s a Monster Train. Don’t involve me in that.”

“…It’s bothersome.”

As expected they didn’t have the motivation to help. Even at the desperate screaming, they didn’t even get disturbed. Instead, they felt it was extremely bothersome. To the Hajime who averted his eyes from the desperate glare of the rabbit eared girl, maybe she sensed that Hajime didn’t want to help her, from the girl’s eyes, even more tears overflowed, just from where did those tears come from kind of crying.

“Waiiit~, don’t leabe me behi~ind! Pleasee~!!”

The rabbit eared girl raised her voice even more.

Even so, Hajime still didn’t feel any motivation to help her at all, at this rate, the rabbit eared girl without fail would get eaten. Right, that if the double headed Tyrant didn’t goes around the rabbit eared girl and direct his killing intent at them.

The double headed Tyrant went around in between Hajime and the rabbit eared girl, and released a roar with killing intent.

“”Gruuaaaaaaa!!””

Hajime reacted sensitively to it.

“Aa?”

Just now, his existence was denied. The object of preying was seen. The enemy is standing on the way! To the double headed Tyrant’s killing intent, Hajime body reacted, to the enemy who had the intent to kill! Like that.

The double headed Tyrant caught up with the rabbit eared girl, one of the head opened its jaw. The rabbit eared girl, sensing that sign

and looked behind and looking at the countless sharp fangs closing before her eyes, “Ah, it’s ending here eh… …” despair words like that could be seen in her eyes.

However at the next moment,

Bang!!

A sound of dry explosion that she never heard before resounded across the canyon a flash line could be seen passing through the two rabbit ears standing due to fear. And now, one of the approaching double headed Tyrant’s head were pierced and pulverized from the back of the head right before her eyes.

The other head that lost its strength crashed into the grounds, following the law of inertia, sliding on the ground. The double headed Tyrant that lost its balance toppled over the place while creating rumbling voices.

From the impact, the rabbit eared girl once again get blown away. The place she landed was clearly right before Hajime.

“Kyaaaaaa~! He, help please~e!”

While falling toward Hajime who was before her eyes, the rabbit eared girl’s hand were reaching out to him. Her outfit was all tattered, and a place that shouldn’t be seen for a woman was clearly visible. And with the awful crying face, it was a scene

where a man would without a doubt catch her.

“Are you stupid?, Impudent”

However, it was Hajime Quality. In an instant he poured magic to the Magic Powered 2-Wheeled Drive to retreat and magnificently evaded the rabbit eared girl.

“Eeh～!?”

The rabbit eared girl shocked shriek could be heard while she was falling right before Hajime eyes, twitching while lying face down with both arms and legs extended out. She didn’t pass out, but it seems like she couldn’t move while enduring the pains.

“…Amusing.”

Yue looked at the shameful sight of the rabbit eared girl over Hajime shoulder, and held a lightly cruel impression. In the meantime, the other one of the double-headed Tyrant’s head, bite and eating it’s dead head and regained its balance, now had become more like a normal Tyrant at side glance.

The normal Tyrant with fury and anger in its eyes let out a roar. The rabbit eared girl jump up to wake up at the sound, unexpectedly stout, or rather stubborn. Desperately trying to stand up the rabbit eared girl, once again with teary eyes, and with an unexpectedly fast movement hid behind Hajime.

It seems like she was motivated to rely on Hajime to the bitter end. Well, she will die by herself, and she could comprehend that Hajime had done something to knocked down one of the heads, of course it's an expected action.

"Oi, kora. A gag like existence Rabbit ear! Why the hell did you make us as your shield without permission, don't drag us into it. Be manly and do a suicidal attack!"

To the rabbit eared girl who is grasping the hem of Hajime's coat, I absolutely wouldn't release it! From the bottom of his heart Hajime glare at her with annoyed eyes. Yue who was sitting on the back seat was pushing the rabbit eared girl with her leg, like telling her to "Release it".

"N, no way! Now, you would abandon me if I release it right!?"

"Isn't that natural? Why should I help an unfamiliar annoying rabbit?"

"Immediate reply!? Which part is natural! Even you should have a good heart right! Don't you feel guilty inside your heart from abandoning a helpless beautiful girl?!"

"I had put it behind in the depth of the hell. Furthermore, don't call yourself a beautiful girl!"

“Th, then if you help me… …I, I will listen to one request from you, anything is fine”

The rabbit eared girl leaned closer with blush and upturned eyes. Cunning, truly cunning action. If the face weren’t sullied by the tears and the dripping nose, it would surely be charming. Actually, if you look at the dirty girl closer, she who called herself beautiful, her appearance seems to be fairly good, a pretty girl with white hair and blue eyes. If it was an average guy, they would get swoon over even if she was sullied.

But the one in front of her eyes weren’t an ordinary man.

“I don’t need that. Other than that, don’t bring your filthy face closer, it’s dirty.”

It’s a brutal anywhere you go.

“Fi, filthy!? The first thing said and it’s filthy! It’s too much! I firmly oppose i- ‘Gwugaaa!’ Hii～! Help～!”

The moment she raised her voice to oppose Hajime’s words, the Tyrant let out a ‘You guys, don’t you dare to ignore me!’ like roar, and start bending it’s body to rush over.

The rabbit eared girl raised a miserable shriek while forcibly getting in between Yue and Hajime. Seemed to be annoyed, Yue kicked the rabbit eared girl who was trying to get on the Magic

Powered 2-Wheeled Drive trying to drop her off, the rabbit eared girl desperately clung “I definitely won’t release iiit!” while getting shoe mark imprinted on her cheek.

As if feeling ridiculed while looking at that scene, the Tyrant glared at Hajime and the others with more anger in the eyes, and finally, started to charge.

Immediately following, Hajime raised his hand and lock on the gun’s muzzle to the Tyrant forehead. In the moment of less than 0.1 second, the process of aiming and firing were completed. With one gunshot, a straight flash line pierced the area between the Tyrant’s eyes.

In an instant, after convulsing a bit, the Tyrant slowly fell sideway while making a tremor.

To that vibration, the rabbit eared girl reflexively let out “Hue?” sound like an idiot, and timidly showed her face between Hajime’s armpit to see the end of that Tyrant’s fate.

“It’s dead… That Daihedoa, with one blow…”

The rabbit eared girl opened her eyes wide with a surprised look on her face. Seems like that double headed Tyrant is called “Daihedoa”.

The rabbit eared girl dumbfounded and staring stiffly at the

remains of the Daihedoa, while getting kicked by Yue and clinging to Hajime. Since a while ago, the long rabbit ears were brushing Hajime's eyes, with seriously gloomy mood, 'Enough' Hajime elbowed her on the head to drop her down.

"Hebuu!!"

Letting out a groaning sound, and while shouting "My head~ my heaaad~", the rabbit eared girl used both her hand to hold her head while writhing on the ground. After looking with a cold glance, Hajime poured magic into the Magic Powered 2-Wheeled Drive and advanced forward like nothing had happened.

Sensing that sign, the rabbit eared girl who was rolling on the floor grumbling suddenly jump up to wake up with frightful vigour, "I won't let you get away~!" and once again clung to Hajime's waist. As expected, she was considerably resilient.

"Thank you so much for the help! I am from the Rabbit clan one of the Hauria, My name is Shia! For now please save my companion!"

And, considerably shameless.

Hajime glance to the side looking at the clinging rabbit eared girl. Thus, right after getting out of the hell, with another troublesome matter, he let out another sigh.

Arifureta: Volume 3 Chapter 8

Shia Haulia's Circumstances

"Please help my tribe!"

Rabbit-eared girl Shia Haulia's voice echoes in the canyon. Apparently this rabbit wasn't alone and her comrades were also in a similar predicament. She is very desperate, and though Yue kept increasing the strength of her kicks, there is no sign of letting go despite the shoe marks on her cheek.

Because she was so desperate, Hajime couldn't help… … using his Lightning-clad.

"ABABABABABABABABABABAABABABA!?"

After adjusting the voltage and current to non-lethal, she probably won't be able to move for a while. Shia's rabbit ears straightened out and her hair produced smoke. When Lightning-clad stopped, she fell down in convulsions.

"Geez, what a shameless rabbit. Shall we go, Yue."

"N…"

Because there was nothing else to do, Hajime started pouring magic into the bike.

But…

“I, I won’t let go～”

Shia got up like a zombie and clung onto Hajime leg. Surprised, Hajime immediately stopped injecting magic into the bike.

“Y,you are just like a zombie. Although it’s non-lethal… how did you get up? It scared me for a moment…”

“… Creepy.”

“Uu～ What did you say! I also have something to say! Kicking and electrocuting me, that was so cruel! I’ll sue you, you know! As apology, please help my clan!”

In her anger, Shia issued her demand with unexpected composure. Though Hajime thought about dragging her as she is, when he thinks she won’t let go anytime soon and imagines a blood-stained rabbit-eared girl who keep clinging to him… It gave him chills.

“Geez, what is it? For now I’ll hear it so let go. Eh, don’t casually

wipe your face with my coat!”

When he said he’ll hear her out, Shia’s face start to brigthen with a smile and she casually wipes her dirty face with Hajime’s coat. What good ettiquete. Irritated, Hajime hit her and she let out a scream “Hagyun!” while crouching.

“I-I was hit again! Even father never hit me before! Look well at my beauty, and this proportion… can’t be that you like male… so that’s why you refuse my seduction back there! Al,afunn!?”

Because he heard some improper remark, with Shia in crouching position, Hajime give her a heel-drop at her head. Some vein can be seen in his forehead.

“Who’s homo, annoying rabbit. now that you mention it how did you know that reference. Yue and you, where the heck did you learn that…? Well, let put that aside for now. Though I don’t know where is that seduction gag come from, the reason I refuse your invitation because there is higher level bishoujo beside me. Try to look at Yue’s dignified form and I can’t understand where you get the nerve to seduce”

While saying that Hajime steal a glance at Yue. Hearing his word, Yue was covering her blushing cheek with her hand while shaking her body. Her hair reflecting the sunlight shine with star-like light. Her bisque doll-like skin now dyed in faint red, capable to charm anyone without exception.

Appearance different from the first time they met. Wearing pure

white dress and black mini-skirt decorated with frill, a long coat with blue line spread from the top. Also, short boots and kneesocks. All of it are made from Oscar's clothes and demonic beast materials by Yue herself. It also have high durability to protect the user.

Meanwhile, Hajime wear similar clothing composed of black and red with black and red line coat. This is also made by Yue. At first Yue made him white clothes to give pair-look feeling, of course it was quite embarassing because of his white hair make him all-white, Hajime feel unpleasant about it then settled with current style.

Shia can only flinch with "Uu" when she see Yue's beauty. But there is one thing that need to be corrected by Hajime, because it was his subjective view without including proportion as well. In a word, when seen objectively Shia won't lose in term of a bishoujo.

A long and straight gray hair tinted with blue hue and clear-blue eyes. White eyebrows and eyelashes also her white skin made her figure feel mysterious. Her hand and feet also slender and long, rabbit ear and tail that move added to her loveliness. When seen, furry-lovers (kemona) surely will unconciously shed tear in gratitude.

Above all… there is one thing that Yue lack. That is to say Shia have big boobs and it also emphatized by her ragtag clothes, truly a weapon that can't keep silent. It shake violently everytime she move. Violently not just bounce, for confirmation.

In short, her confidence in her figure and style is not a strange thing. It can be said Hajime is the strange one, before he surely will

“Rabbit ear!!” and Ru*ndaibu…

Even so, for Shia whose pride was damaged. The forbidden word was said…

“Bu-but! In case of chest it’s my win! Didn’t you see that girl is flat-chested!”

“Flat-chest.”

“Flat-chest.”

“Pettanko.”

Her shout echoes in the valley. Yue who tremble in embarrassment suddenly get of from the bike with her expression hidden behind her bangs.

Hajime can only mutter “A～a” while looking at the sky and silently gesture to pray. Rabbit-ear, rest in peace…

In that time, It can be seen from Yue. A cliff deeper than Raisen Grand Canyon.

Yue whisper-like voice can be hear by the trembling Shia’ rabbit ear.

—… Have you finished your prayer?

—… As if apologize can solve it

—… …

—… Just die! Just die!

“”Storm Emperor””

—- A—-!!

Suddenly tornado appear and swallow Shia then launch her into the sky. Her scream echoes in the canyon. After 10 seconds, Gusha (TL note : or Bamm but Crunch is perfect I think)! she fall in front of Hajime and Yue.

Her convulsion with buried have completely similar to Inuoie’s character. Completely gag-like. Though her figure was extraordinary what a child of failure. Only wearing ragtag clothes(?) and added with this, it can’t be called nothing but garbage. Thing that must not be seen was seen because her upside down figure. Something like this can awake hundred years of love.

Yue seems to express “Job well done!” while wipe her sweat and walk to Hajime. With him sit on the bike she quitely stare at him.

“… Do you like it big?”

It truly an problematic question. If Hajime say “YES!” he will suffer the same fate as that regrettable rabbit that still convulsing now. That must be avoided.

“… Yue, it’s not about the size. Who the partner is the most important”

“…”

For now, instead of decisive YES or NO, Hajime answer with something vague. Truly indecisive. Yue narrow her eyes in consent then silently sit on the back.

In secret, Hajime with cold-sweat try to find some topic to break the silence, but nothing come to mind. Hajime’s Rai*Card truly useless.

However, immediately after his eyes glance at Shia that trying to free her head while her body tremble with both hands gripping the ground. In his mind, he tried to make this as their talking topic.

“She is moving… truly a zombie. Her endurance level truly above average…”

“… Nn”

After a long silence she answer and that make him relieved and at the same time Zubo(Plop) sound come out when Shia puller out her mud-covered head.

“Uu~ It looked with cruel eyes. Even though I didn’t want to be seen like this”

With tear-filled eyes, Shia pat her ragtag clothes and muttering some unknown thing while crawling closer to Hajime. It truly like a horror film.

“Haa~, how high is your endurance? It’s not normal you know… What are you?”

With Hajime’s suspicousness, Shia sits up and finally tell her problem. She made serious expression while sitting in front of Hajime and Yue who are on the bike. Well it already late for a lot of thing but…

“Let me reintroduce myself, I am Shia Haulia from Haulia RabbitMan tribe. The truth is…”

Finally Shia began to summarized her story.

Shia and her tribe, Haulia RabbitMan tribe of hundred used to

lived quitely in “Haltina sea of trees”. RabbitMan tribe have excellent hearing and stealth skill, but their specs are low compared to other demi-human because of that they are ranked lower compared to other demi-human. They are gentle and dislike fighting, and treat the entire tribe as one family. In addition, they have excellent figure in general, different from elf’s beauty. Because they are cute they are caught by empire to be enslaved and become a popular product.

One day in Haulia tribe, one of RabbitMan tribe, a girl was born with abnormality. Even though RabbitMan basically have dark blue hair, that child’s hair is gray with blue hue. Moreover, it has magic that demi-human didn’t have, to directly manipulate magic. To be able to use a certain peculiar magic.

Of course the tribe was greatly puzzled. A child that impossible to born in RabbitMan tribe, no, even demi-human. It has power similar to demonic beast, normally it will be discriminated. However, she was born in RabbitMan tribe that has deep connection to each other as a family of hundred. Haulia tribe decide to raise the girl.

However, if her existence were found by the demi-human country “Faea Belgaen”, she would be executed for sure. That is how much they despise demonic beasts. As the rule of this country as soon as a demonic beast is found it must be annihilated, there is a record of a person that expulsed for letting demonic beast away. In addition, there are discrimination of tribe, for a tribe that use magic they will be persecuted human and demi-human. Other race who wield magic already enter the sea of tree, but immediately killing them has become the usual.

Therefore, Haulia tribe hid the girl and raised her in secret for

sixteen years. However, her existence was found out. Because of that, Haulia tribe escaped to Sea of tree before getting caught in Faea Belgaen.

There are other who decide to go to Northern mountain area for the time being, because there are mountain products. Although it was uncivilized, but it's better than caught by the empire or a slave trader.

However their attempt was crushed by the empire. Even though they arrived in Sea of Tree, they were immediately found by empire Soldiers. It was unknown why the Soldiers were there, but encountering 1 squadron, Haulia tribe had no choice but run away to south.

Though the men tried to obstruct to let women and children go, but there are differences in battle potential between trained empire soldier who can use magic and the gentle and peaceful RabbitMan tribe. When they notice, already half was captured.

They keep desperately running away to avoid annihilation and arrived at Raisen Grand Canyon as the last resort. Indeed, the imperial army won't come here where magic can't be used. Until everything is over the tribe will wait here. The tribe betting between attacked by demonic beast or the empire's Soldiers withdrawing come first.

However, empire's Soldiers didn't try to withdraw at all. They decided to wait at the canyon entrance where the platoon position themselves in (the staircase). They wait for RabbitMan tribe to come out when attacked by demonic beasts.

And that was what happened, the demonic beasts attacked them. After what happened they can't surrender to empire anymore. Between escaping the canyon or fleeing from demonic beasts, Haulia tribe only option was to escape into the canyon. That's why, they can jump into the depth…

"… When they come to, of the 60 people, only 40 left. They will be annihilated if this keeps up. Somehow help us!"

From the start Shia tried to appeal with regret and bitterness in her face. Apparently, Shia is the same as Yue and Hajime, an exception of this world. She was the same as Yue in particular an atavism.

After finished listening to the story Hajime answer fankly without any change in his expression.

"I refuse."

Arifureta: Volume 3 Chapter 9

Contract Completed

“I refuse.”

A frank word from Hajime resulted in silence. With an expression as if she doesn’t understand what was said, Shia opened her mouth with a stupid expression and stared intently at Hajime. Then, Hajime who already heard her story, started to pour magic into his bike and a loud yell of protest can be heard.

“Wa, wa, wait! Why! No matter if you think of the flow it should be “How pitiful! Don’t worry!! I’ll do something about it!!” with a reliable smile or something like that you know! As expected I also think it should be like that! Why, sudden encounter with a bishoujo and you just ignore it! Eh, ah, ignoring me and going! I won’t let you, you know～””

Her protest ignored, Shia jump to cling onto Hajime’s leg again. From serious and serene atmosphere a while ago, her shameless rabbit mode is back.

Glaring at Shia who won’t show any sign of releasing his feet, Hajime only releases a sigh.

“You know… Is there any merit for me if I help you.”

“Me-merit?”

“Being chased from the empire, being chased from the forest, you’re nothing but a seed of troubles, there is only demerit. Assuming you escaped from the canyon, what’s next? Won’t you just get caught by the empire or will you flee to the mountain. Then, what will you do? Rely on me again right? This time it was to protect from the empire’s Soldiers and escape from the northern mountain range, right.”

“Uu, tha-that is… … bu-but!”

“The two of us have a purpose in this travel. There is no time to do something so troublesome.”

“That can’t be… … but, even you can see the reason to protect!”

“… That, didn’t you say it a while ago. What do you mean?… Is it related to your peculiar magic?”

Hajime unable to undestand the meaning of the Shia’s tear filled story. Now that he thinks about it, why did Shia stray away from her comrade is a mystery. Hajime asked whether there is a relation with that.

“Eh? Ah, yes. It was called “Future Vision/Clairvoyance”, I can see

a predicted future. If I choose to do this, what will happen? I can see something along that line… Also, in time of danger I can automatically see the future. Well, the future that I see isn't absolute… Tha, that's right. I am useful you know! WIth "Clairvoyance" we'll know if there are danger! I saw it a while ago! I can see your figure helping us! In fact, it helped me to meet you!"

Shia continued her explanation, her "Clairvoyance" can predict future based on her choice of action and it need a large amount of magic to activate this and she will be exhausted in one try. In addition, there are times when it'll be automatically activated, whether she wants it or not, when the situation will be dangerous for Shia. Although it also consumes a large amount of magic, it seems only to consume 1/3 of the usual.

Apparently, Shia left her former place to find Hajime or something along that line? Choosing her action, she found a future where Hajime protect her and her tribe. After that, she left in order to find Hajime. She was too excited, that's why she moved alone in this dangerous place.

"If you have such amazing special magic, why did they found you? If you can predict the danger you won't be found out in Faea Belgaen, right?"

When pointed by Hajime, Shia react with an "Ugh" while averting her eyes around.

"I,if I use it on my own then it'll be unusable for a while…"

“That means you already used it before they found out… What the heck did you use it for?”

“That is, I’m anxious about my best friend’s romance”

“Isn’t that the same as peeping! The heck did you use precious magic for”

“Uu~I will seriously reflect from now on?”

“As expected, it’s useless. If you ask what is useless, you’re useless. This regrettable/failure rabbit”

Hajime looks away in amazement while Shia, crying, keep clinging to him. When Hajime prepared to go away, an unexpected help come to Shia.

“… Hajime, take her along”

“Yue?”

“!? From the start I think you’re a nice lady! I am sorry calling you flat-chest-afunh!”

Hajime dumbfounded when he hear Yue while Shia looks excited

with sparkling eyes tried to say good things. Only one word too much then collapsed while suppressing her cheek that got slapped by Yue.

"… Just as a guide around Sea of Trees"

"A～"

Certainly, it is said only demi-human won't get lost in Sea of Trees and if the RabbitMan tribe will guide them then that's reassuring. Though there are some measures that I can think of when lost, but it can be said it was a rough idea without certainty. At worst, they will kidnap some demi-human to question about the road, but honestly if there are demi-human that willingly guide them is the best. However, Hajime hesitated because Shia have too much trouble in her hand.

Yue stared at Hajime to break his hesitation.

"… It's okay, we are the strongest."

That is the word Hajime said in the Abyss. They won't hold back for this world. When they cover each other they are the strongest. Hajime can only give a wry smile hearing his own words.

With help from RabbitMan tribe, it will be easier to search around Sea of Trees. "Before the roots of the tongue dries, too (idiom, something along I don't mean to be a liar but)" they might get into

trouble with empire's Soldiers and other demi-humans so they should be avoided. Of course, it's not like they are busybodies, but if it was unavoidable because there are enemies in front of their best road. I have decided to even "kill" those obstructions.

"That is so huh. Oi, be glad regrettable/failure rabbit. I'll make you our guide through the Sea of Trees. The reward will be your life (safety)"

It said without any mistake, but his line was completely Yakuza-like. However, even so, the promise to keep them safe come from a strong man who can easily kill the demonic beasts in the canyon make Shia so happy that she can fly.

"Tha, Thank you very much! Uu~ what a relief~, seriously what a relief~"

Shia cried with joy. However, she immediately stand up because there are no time to lose.

"U,umm, my best regard! Th, then what should I call you…"

"N? Now that you mention it… I am Hajime, Nagumo Hajime"

"… Yue"

"I see, Hajime-san and Yue-chan"

Shia said their name several time to remember it. But, Yue dissatisfied and objected her.

“… Use -san. Failure rabbit”

“Fue!?”

Shia was puzzled by Yue commanding tone, it seems she think Yue was younger because of her appearance. When she heard Yue is a vampire and older, she immediately apologize by prostrating. For Yue, it’s not like she hate her. Though don’t know why… For example when Yue glance at certain part of Shia there seems to be hatred, though the reason is not certain!

“Come, for now failure rabbit get on the back” (my note:and Yue hate-o-meter will be maxed when a part of Shia touch her)

Hajime, being used to Yue’s brilliant mind, instructed Shia to hop on. And that’s resulted in Shia’s confusion. It can’t be helped because there are no two wheeled vehicle that moves by using magic in this world. However, because Shia understood it was some kind of vehicle, Shia slowly sit behind Yue.

Even though it was a tandem seat using a certain demonic beast’s leather, because Yue was small there is enough space for them. And Shia being suprised by the softness of the seat start leaning forward to Yue, pressing her weapon.

Yue who was suprised with the feels start to slip away to the front of Hajime. Her petiteness fit perfectly between Hajime's arms. Apparently, Yue can't stand the feeling of the weapon that hit her. Hajime reveal a wry smile after guessing the reason while Yue entrust her weight into Hajime have a bitter expression.

Shia say, "Eh? Why?" without understanding what happen, then cling to Hajime's waist with happy expression. Hajime as the usual just poured in his magic and drove along. It's not like he does react or anything if you ask him. But it was a lie if he say no.

Without noticing the conflict in Hajime and Yue's mind, Shia ask a question over Hajime's shoulder.

"U,umm. Even though faster is better… Is this a vehicle? What kind is it? Moreover, Hajime-san and Yue-san is a magic-user right? Even though it shouldn't be able to use here…"

"ah~, I'll explain on the way"

While said so, Hajime increase his magic and accelerate the bike. The vehicle move smoothly, over Hajime's shoulder, Shia's scream "Kyaaa~!" can be heard. The ground and wall seems to flow to their back as they go.

In the bottom of the canyon Shia clung tightly into Hajime while closing her eyes because of the speed, after a while maybe because she get accustomed to it, Shia gradually becoming excited. When

Hajime goes around a curve to avoid a large rock, she make noise excitedly.

On the way, Hajime start to explain why they can use magic and drive this bike, about how Hajime's arms was something like an artifact. And Shia only able to open her eyes wide in astonishment.

"Eh, then, both of you also able to directly manipulate magic, also capable to use unique magic…"

"Ahh, something like that"

"… N"

For a while Shia's mind turn blank in surprise, suddenly, she buried her face onto Hajime's shoulder. Then, somehow start to sobs.

"… What is it now? Once become noisy then get depressed and now crying… You are trully emotionally unstable"

"… Too late?"

"What is too late? What do you mean? I am normal! … It just that, when I think I'm not alone… Somehow it make me happy…"

“”…””

It seems because of her ability similar to the demonic beast, she always think she was the only one in this world and that make her feel the solitude. Her family raised her for 16 years and called her a family member although it brought dangers to them, even fleeing into Sea of Trees for her sake, that must be their affection. Even so, no, because of it, the feeling of solitude because “she was different from the others” can be felt.

Hearing Shia’s words, Yue turned silent while thinking. It seem her expresionless face is losing more color. Hajime is somehow able to understand Yue feelings now. Probably, Yue’s circumstance almost the same as Shia. Both of them capable to directly manipulate magic and using unique magic, With no one that can be called “kin” in that era.

But, there is a definite difference between them. While Yue did not have family that love her, Shia had. That’s something give her a complex feeling along with envy. Added that from Shia’s perspective, Yue was a “kin” that she finally met. It was a complicated matter.

To Yue’s head, Hajime patted then stroked it.For Hajime who was raised in rich country, Japan, with affection received from the parents, although there are no “kin”-like existence, the solitude that he feels can’t be compared to existence of a Queen, of Yue. Therefore, he doesn’t have anything to say that can help her. He can only show her that she is not alone “now”.

Even though Hajime had completely changed, but there is still kindness for those he cares about. Rather, if he didn’t met Yue, that

would have also disappear from him. Yue is the one who stopped Hajime from falling into the path of heresy/scum. Because Yue is here, Hajime can retain his humanity. As proof, Hajime will protect her promise with Shia. To protect Haulia tribe from empire's Soldiers so they can guide him in the Sea of Trees.

Whether Hajime's feelings were transmitted or not, Yue let loose her tension and lean her back into Hajime. As if she want to be spoiled.

"Umm~ Did you forget me? Here I said "It big news. I am not alone anymore. Because I have you by my side" or something like that then I cry? I, need to be comforted you know? To be spoiled you know? Even so, even though the chance is here, why suddenly you go to your own world! I am lonely! Please take me too! Even though, you two…"

""Silence failure rabbit""

"… Yes… Sob…"

To the whimpering Shia, suddenly make a ruckus that make Hajime and Yue shout instinctively. However, to left alone crying girl and make the world of two can be called cruel. Added that she got yelled, Shia was truly pitiful. But, her strength is her strong point. In her mind "First I must make them call me by name~ after all they are comrades I finally found. I won't let them go~!" became her new goal.

Meanwhile, Yue and Hajime yelled echoed then demonic beasts'

roar can be heard in the distance. Apparently there are lot of demonic beasts in front of them.

“! Hajime-san! We will arrive soon! That demonic beasts’ voice is… close! Close to father and the other’s place!”

“Daa~, don’t shout near my ear! Did you hear! Hang on tight because I’ll increase our speed!”

Hajime pour even more magic power, and the bike start to accelerate further. Wall and ground flow past them fast.

After 2 minutes. They stop with a drift when they see dozen of RabbitMan tribe are under attack.

Arifureta: Volume 3 Chapter 10

Haulia Tribe and Encounter

Haulia Tribe and EncounterScreams echo inside Raisen Grand Canyon.

Figures of desperate RabbitMen fleeing to hide behind rocks can be seen. If you look around you can see 20 RabbitMen hiding behind rocks. If combined with those hidden there should be around 40 people.

In the sky, flying-type demonic beasts that were rare even inside the abyss are glaring at the frightened RabbitMan tribe. If you ask, their appearance are similar to the monster called Wyvern. With span/height around 3-5 meters, sharp claws and fang, also equipped with sharp thorn at the swelling end of their long tail similar to morning star.

“Hy-hyveria…”

Over his shoulder, Shia’s trembling voice can be heard. It seem those Wyvern-like creatures are called “Hyveria”. There are six of them, trying to catch the RabbitMan tribe while circling in the sky.

Finally one of Hyveria takes action. After rotating in the sky, it dives towards one of the large rocks where some RabbitMan tribe

members are and strikes the rock with its tail helped by centrifugal force. Along with deafening sound, the rock was crushed and the RabbitMen came out screaming.

As if saying “I’ve been waiting”, the Hyveria starts to devour the helpless prey by opening its jaw. It’s aimed at two RabbitMen. What’s left is a body without waist and unmoving small child that the man from the RabbitMan tribe tried to cover.

Seeing those scene, despair can be seen on the other RabbitMan tribe. Because who knows when their others family member will be Hyveria prey. But, that’s not what happened.

The reason is there is someone who contracted to help them, the monster who escaped the abyss…

DOPANn!!DOPANn!!

Two flashes and sound of gunshot can be heard in the canyon. One of the shot aimed at middle of the head of that attacking Hyveria. With a hole in its head, it falls to the side of the two crouching rabbit producing a cloud of dust, its roar stopped.

At the same time, a tremendous sound can be heard behind them. Without any time to be surprised, the RabbitMan tribe turn around, they saw one of the Hyveria lose its arm with blood bursting from it while writhing in pain. Soon some of the RabbitMan tribe lose strength in their waist. That’s because while they are focused on the first Hyveria, they didn’t notice another Hyveria come close to them. Of the two bullets, the other one’s shot through the second

Hyveria's arm. Losing its balance, it falls to the ground while writhing in pain.

"Wh-what is…"

At that time, the man who tried to cover the child can mutter that while alternating his vision between the Hyveria that died after being shot in the head and the one that is writhing in the back.

In addition, when he heard the gunshot, he could only see the flash of something coming at the Hyveria. Suddenly the Hyveria collapsed causing the earth tremor, when it stopped, it was dead already.

Seeing their comrade is dead, the other Hyveria in the sky roared in rage at the same time. To the cowering RabbitMan tribe, they can hear a sound that never heard before because of their excellent hearing. The high-pitched "Kiiiiiii" sound, similar to that of a jet. This time another sound comes and they turn their eyes to the source, what they see is a black vehicle, from that 3 figures can be seen coming in highspeed.

Of the three, one of them is someone they know too well. In the morning, she suddenly disappeared, she is the girl they are looking for in the first place. She feels it was her fault that the tribe is in the state they are now, trying to conceal it with her cheerfulness, but her expression shows her anguish. Thinking of reckless things, while worrying she suddenly disappears. At the same time, carefully the Haulia tried to look for her. Even though, they thought the tribe will be annihilated before finding her…

The rabbit-eared girl fly in the sky with high speed. Shia's scream echoes in the canyon. The RabbitMan tribe scream "Shia?!" looking at this unbelievable spectacle with their eyes popped. The Hyveria also roared trying to catch the prey that coming to them, but Shia who stiffened and staring at the sky just fly passed their eyes.

That girl waving at them from the black vehicle. Cheerfulness can be seen in her face. And the RabbitMan tribe look at her with expression as if they can't believe what they saw.

"Everyone~, I have called for help~!"

When they hear her voice, they finally believe it was real then all of the RabbitMan tribe called her name.

" " " " " " " " " "Shia! ?" " " " " " " " " " "

Hajime made an irritated expression while driving the magic bike in high speed. After confirming her family safety, Shia standing up on the bike while waving in happiness. Even though that is fine, but so that she won't fall from the bike moving in high speed, Shia lean her body to Hajime and her heavy-weight lethal weapon bouncing up and down, then hit his head. Because of that his aim shifted and the second Hyveria didn't get killed.

Hajime gripped Shia clothes who was jumping up and down with"pyokopyoko" to stop her. Shia who noticed it try to question him. But even if she can't see Hajime's face, because she noticed the atmosphere, she timidly asked.

“U,umm, Hajime-san? What happened? Why did you grip my clothes?”

“… If you’re so energetic that it obstruct the combat, I thought I’ll give you a job.”

“J,job… W,what should I do?”

“It’s easy, just go to the front of those starving demonic beasts. Easy right”

“!? Wa, What are you, ah, don’t lift me～, don’t swing me～”

Shia who’s struggling with nervous expression was lifted easily by Hajime who has more than 10.000 Strength(Str).

Hajime, who is driving the two wheeler (bike) with one hand starts drifting and with expression telling there is no need to talk, throws Shia to the sky with the help of centrifugal force.

“Go! Failure Rabbit!”

“Iya-aaa～～!!”

Because of that, Hajime won't miss that chance. Those flying Hyveria has become easy targets. Four gunshots can be heard simultaneously, it penetrate those Hyveria's jaws and their heads crushed.

Without time to scream, the Hyveria lose their power and fall to the ground. They are stronger than that double-headed tyrano-like "Daihedoa" that attacked Shia, in this canyon they are known as dangerous and troublesome demonic beast, it's hard to resist their attack. When looked by their predator eyes, the RabbitMan tribe stiffened.

With their ears, they can hear the girl's sceam becoming closer.

"A-aaaaa~, help me~, Hajime-sa-~n!"

Hajime pass through the RabbitMan tribe that start running to catch her and splendidly catch the falling Shia then stopped the two wheeler (bike) with a drift. After that, he throws Shia away with a "Pei-".

"Afun-! Uu~, I want you to be gentler~. I want better treatment~. I want you treat me as important as Yue-san~"

Shia protest while sobbing. It's not like Shia loved Hajime. It just that, within the despair she currently in when she "see" hope, Hajime, a mysterious sense of trust is born. Even though his character is completely without mercy, he won't betray his promise. Added that Hajime and Shia are in a similar circumstance. "Similar" because she can feel something familiar about him, also

that Hajime cherished Yue who is the “same” as her. She understand that even with the short time they are together. Because of that she hope that happen to “me too”.

With the impact of catch and release, her ragtag clothes becoming more worn out added that her crying as she kicking around, Shia’s appearance is so pitiful. As expected it was too much… when he think so, he take out a coat from the treasure warehouse and put it at Shia’s head. I don’t want to be involved anymore than this, he thought without any remorse.

However, even with this Shia was happy. Suddenly something was put on her head and when she saw it, it was a coat and start to laugh. She immediately wears it. It was the same white coat with blue hue as Yue. The same one that Yue made for Hajime to form pair-look.

“Mo,mou! Hajime-san is just not honest huh～, It was similar clothe as Yue… I-is it “my woman appeal”? It’s bad you know～, I am not that cheap you know, please be more affectionate～”

Shia said that gripping the coat’s hem with “Iyaniyan” look. And that make Hajime irritated again, he silently pull out Donner, aimed at Shia then fired it.

“Hakyun!”

The bullet that fired was non-lethal bullet coated with rubber-like leather of a demonic beast. It just that, because of the firepower, Shia jumped back and fall to the ground then rolling around in

pain. She scream “My head~ My head~”. But, as expected of her endurance, she immediately gets up. To that Shia, the RabbitMan tribe start to gather to get her treated.

“Shia! Are you okay!?”

“Father!”

The one who called her was a middle aged rabbit-eared man with short dark blue-hair. It’s clear whose rabbit-eared old man he is. This spectacle give out surreal feeling for him, immediately Shia and her father start to talk to the others RabbitMan tribe about what happened. After ensure that they are safe, they look at Hajime.

“Is it okay to call you Hajime-dono? I am Kam, Shia’s father and also the chief of Haulia tribe. I can’t thank you enough for helping Shia and our tribe out of the predicament. Even helping us escape… As father and the chief, I wish to express my gratitude”

Kam, who introduced himself as the chief of Haulia immidiately bows to him. Behind his back the others Haulia tribe did the same.

“Well, please raise your head. But, when it’s over be our guide in the Sea of Trees. Don’t forget that you know? Also, aren’t you trusting us too easily. Even though demi-humans and humans aren’t in good relationship with each other…”

Forgetting about Shia's existance, in this world demi-humans are discriminated. In fact, they are cornered here because of a human. Even so, they bow to Hajime that is clearly a human and accepted Hajime's help. Even though that is the only method left, isn't it too simple? Hajime started to doubt them whilst concealing his disgust.

To that, Kam answer with a wry smile.

"You're trusted by Shia. By association we trust you too. It's because we are family…"

Hearing the answer, Hajime was half-amazed and half-admiring them. For a tribe to leave their hometown for the sake of a single girl and to be able to trust a human they just met truly their caution is so thin. It can be said their personality is too kind.

"Ehehe, it's okay father. Even though Hajime is without mercy even to women, move without any concern to others, so cruel that he easily uses others as a decoy, he will protect his promise, he is not a scum who'd trample other's hope! He will protect us for sure!"

"Ha ha ha, so that is. In other words a shy person huh. If that's so, I believe him"

Hearing Shia and Kam, the other tribe members also said "I see, a shy one huh" while looking at Hajime with warmth in their eyes then nod their head.

Hajime with vein appear at his head start to pull out Donner, but he was ambushed.

“… N, Hajime is a shy one (in the bed)”

“Yue!?”

While Hajime was shocked, demonic beasts are gathering to their place and surely will become troublesome if they keep still, so they start to depart.

They are advancing to the exit of the Raisen Grand Canyon as the goal.

Arifureta: Volume 4 Chapter 1

Chapter 31: Empire's Soldiers

42 people + Rabbit-ear traveling along the canyon.

Naturally, a lot of demonic beasts tried to attack them but to no avail. Those who tried to attacked the RabbitMan tribe without any exception had their head blown with a flash.

That flash accompanied with gunshot, when looked around you can see a lot of demonic beasts' corpse scattered around Raisen Grand Canyon that make the RabbitMan tribe dumbfounded and stare in awe at Hajime who did this.

Especially the child, they are looking at Hajime's overwhelming strength and see him as their hero with sparkling eyes.

"Fufufu, Hajime-san. The little one are watching you know~ Why don't you wave at them?"

Shia immediately tried to tease Hajime who's already in bad mood because of those child's innocent gaze.

With a vein popped on his head, Hajime silently fired his gun.

DOPANn! DOPANn! DOPANn!

“Awawwawawawawagh!?”

With rubber bullet aimed at her foot, Shia tried to evade it which make her looks like tapdancing. To that spectacle, Shia’s father, Kam only reveal a wry smile meanwhile Yue look at her with amazement.

“Ha Ha Ha, so Shia and Hajime already that close. It’s looks like… Shia already reach that age huh. It’s make father a bit lonely. But if the other is Hajime-dono, then it is a relief…”

Even though her daughter is still shotted at, Kam saw her as if celebrating her departure (as in marriage) with tear forming in the corner of his eyes. The other’s tribe member also look at her with warm gaze although her screaming “Help me～” can be heard.

“Wait, all of you. Why is that you conclusion after looking at this situation?”

“… Unbelievable”

As Yue said, it seems the RabbitMan tribe rather lack of common sense and it’s already become something natural for this tribe. Though it wasn’t known whether it’s applied only to Haulia tribe or

not.

After walking for a long time, their group finally arrive at the entrance of Raisen Grand Canyon. There are finely built staircase as far as Hajime's "Far Sight" can see. The stairs was built by cutting along the wall and it was the type that make an u-turn every 50 meters. Sea of Trees can be reached after walking around half a day after exiting Raisen Grand Canyon.

While Hajime tried looking at the distance, Shia started to talk with uneasiness in her voice.

" Are there any of empire's Soldiers?"

" N? What can I say about. Although there are the possibility of them getting annihilated already…"

" Th, that is, supposed that there are empire's Soldiers around… Hajime-san… What will you do?"

"? What do you mean by that?"

Hajime tilt his head because he can't understand the question asked by Shia. Rabbit-ear of the Rabbbitmen tribe hear perked because of her question.

"Unlike demonic beasts, the enemy are the empire's Soldiers…

human race. The same as Hajime-san. … are you sure you can fight them?”

“Failure rabbit, you, didn’t you already see the future?”

“Yes, I am. Hajime confronting the empire’s Soldiers…”

“Then… What is the problem?”

“I want to confirm it. To protect us, RabbitMan tribe from the empire’s Soldiers and confront the human race. Are you really okay, fighting against humans…”

Having heard Shia’s word, the surrounding RabbitMan tribe nervously looking at Hajime. The children can’t understand what happened but guessing the serious atmosphere started to alternately looking between the adult tribe members and Hajime restlessly.

However, inside such a serious atmosphere Hajime casually said.

“What is wrong with that?”

“Eh?”

Hajime continue his talk ignoring Shia's confusion.

"Like I said. There is no problem for me to fight against human."

"Th,that's, aren't you come from the same race…"

"Didn't your tribe also chased by the same race (demi-human)"

"That is, well, even if you put it that way…"

"Although, you're wrong about the basic"

"Basic?"

Shia was tilting her head and the surrounding RabbitMan tribe looked confused.

"Listen, I am employing your tribe to be my guide. So, I'll be troubled if any of you died so I'll protect it. It's not like I was sympathizing you, or I have any kindness to do that. Moreover, I won't protect you forever. Didn't you remember that?"

"Ugh, yes… I remember…"

“If so, I’ll protect you until my business in Sea of Trees over. Everything are for my own benefit. Because of that it doesn’t matter if it demonic beasts or humans, if they are tried to obstruct my path, they are enemies and enemies must be killed. Simple as that.”‘

“I, I see…”

Shia consented with a wry smile to that Hajime-like answer. Even if she with “Foresight” saw Hajime confronting the empire, because the future wasn’t absolute she didn’t know if it’ll come true or not. There are others future with higher possibility that she seen, one of it was the future where they become slave under the empire while living a life more painful than death. Because Shia think “it was her fault” even though the others didn’t think so, she tried to do with all of her might to confirm which future they’d be in.

“Ha Ha Ha, It was good to understand that. Please leave it to us to guide you through Sea of Trees.”

Kam was laughing cheerfully. Rathen than some stupid sense of justice, if everything is under the condition of give and take then it’ll be more assuring. His face said it all.

Their party approached the stairs. Hajime gone ahead of them in alert. To escape from the empire’s Soldiers, the RabbitMan tribe haven’t had drink or eat anything, but their steps are light. It seems the rumour that demi-humans who unable to use magic have higher physical strength instead is true.

And finally, Hajime's group escaped from Raisen Grand canyon.

What they see over the cliff…

"Oioi, seriously. They are survivor. Even though I was reluctantly stay here because of commander order~ If it was like this, I can bring back some good souvenir home."

There are around 30 Soldiers of empire. Behind them there are a lot of wagons/carriages where marks of camp remained to be seen. All of the Soldiers who dressed in Khaki-like uniform and equipped with a sword or spear and a shield, look surprised at Hajime's group.

However, that only last for a sec. Immediately they become delighted when they saw the RabbitMan tribe.

"Platoon leader! The gray haired RabbitMan also there! Isn't she the one commander want?"

"Ooh, it's look like we are lucky. Even though it's ok to kill the others old one, that's the only one you must keep alive."

"Platoon leader~, there are some women in there, can we taste them a little? We have waited here for 3 days after all. Please overlook it~"

“Geez. Don’t take all of them. If it was only two, no three then it’s okay”

“Hyahho~, as expected of platoon leader! You really can understand us!”

For the empire’s Soldiers, RabbitMan tribe seen only as easy prey for them to catch, they approached while licking their lips looking at female RabbitMans. Seeing those Soldiers, the RabbitMan tribe can do nothing but tremble in fright.

Along those clamoring Soldiers, the man who called platoon leader who’s currently grinning at those RabbitMans finally notice Hajime’s existence.

“Aah? Who are you? It looks like… you’re not a RabbitMan.”

Hajime, who think it was impossible to just pass through those Soldiers, simply respond.

“Aa, I am human”

“Haa~? Why is a human together with RabbitMan? Even coming from the canyon. Aah, are you a slave merchant? Did you hear this information somewhere? What a great business spirit to come here yourself. Well, sorry but hand them over to the empire now”

Assumption come from the platoon leader, although it was natural if you looks at the situation. He also believe that then give order to Hajime.

Of course there is no need for Hajime to follow it.

“I refuse”

“… Did you just say something?”

“Didn’t you hear “I refuse”. Those guy are mine now. I won’t give you even one. I recommend you to give up and go back to your empire now.”

He thought what he hear was a mistake, but he answer back while giving them order. Vein appeared on platoon leader’s head.

“… … boy, mind your word. Is something wrong with your head to not understand who we are?”

“I already know everything. Even you won’t like to be called something wrong with your head right.”

Platoon leader glaring at Hajime after heard his word. The other Soldiers also glared at Hajime creating a tense atmosphere. At that time, the platoon leader probably because of that tense atmosphere finally notice Yue who come from Hajime’s back. Inside the tense

atmosphere come a young girl, maybe because of the gap, he was enchanted by her beauty for a moment while looking at her tightly holding Hajime's clothes, finally smile reappear at his face.

"Aah~ I see, I finally~ understand now. You're nothing but a naive shitty boy. Let me teach you the severity of this world. Ku ku ku, aren't that young miss over beautiful. After I chop your limb of, I'll violate her in front of your eyes then sell her to the slave merchant"

To that word Hajime frown his eyebrows and even from the expressionless Yue, disgust can be felt by everyone who look at her. Yue who can't forgive that men existence hold out her right hand.

However, it was stopped by Hajime. To the dumbfounded Yue Hajime only say one thing.

"In conclusion you are my enemy, right?"

"Aah!? Did you still not understand the situation! You, bastard should be trembling while seeking forgive-!?"

DOPANn!!

The irritated platoon leader unable to finish his word. The reason is, when one gunshot can be heard, his head was shot. On his head a big hole in the middle of forehead can be seen and brain-matter scattered from the back of his head, then collapsed just like that.

Unable to comprehend what happened, the other soldier can only stare dumbfounded at the platoon leader.

DOPAaaNn!

One gunshot can be heard, and at the same time, six empire's Soldiers' head was shotted. Actually it was six shots, but Hajime's speed was so fast that only one gunshot can be heard.

Naturally, after seen their leader and comrade's head shotted the Soldiers become panicked then turned their weapon to Hajime. Though they don't know how, they understood who the cause, what a precise judgement. Personality aside, as expected of empire's Soldiers. Their ability is real.

The Soldiers immediately move forward while the rear started to chant. However, something immediately rolled over to their feet. A black, cylindrical object. What is this? though they puzzled but it they only looked without interrupting their chant and they turn into corpses in the next moment.

DOGAaNn!!

That's because the black object, "grenade", exploded. Moreover metal pieces burst from it just like a "fragmentation grenade". Compared to the real one, it's power was far stronger. It was only able to be created because of this world's unique ore.

Only with one move, around 10 Soldiers immediately died, with their hands and feet blown off, their organs scattered, in addition seven more figures can be heard groaning in pain.

To the explosion in the back, seven Soldiers who act as vanguard immediately stopped their charge. Wondering what happened, six Soldiers who looked at their back, along with their other companions immediately crumbled because of a shot through their head. Blood sprayed around, however one of them remain alive, having lost his power, and remain at his spot. It was not wonder. Only in a moment, his companions was annihilated. It was not like their forces are weak. In fact, there are some elites who complained having received the orders. Therefore, with an expression asking if he was inside a nightmare, his glance wandering around.

And to his ear, an aloof voice can be heard from the cause of this tragedy.

“Un, as expected, if it was against human there is no need to use “Lightning-clad”. The usual bullet and mechanism was enough. Combusting stone is REALLY a convenient one.”

That soldier was surprised and start to turned to Hajime in fright. Hajime while tapping Donner to his shoulder, slowly approached that soldier. His figure who brought death along with his fluttering black coat, made him look like a grim reaper. At least it looks like that to the surviving soldier.

“Hii, do-don’t come! N-no, I don’t want to die. So-someone! Help me!”

That soldier tried plead for his life. His face distorted in fear and liquid leaking from his groin. Hajime look at him coldly and to the soldier who tried to flee, he slowly open fire in succession.

“Hii!”

No impact can be coming to that soldier. What Hajime shot was the Soldiers who was severely injured by the grenades. When he notice it, the last surviving soldier timidly looks around, this time he finally see the disastrous scene of annihilation with his own eyes.

The gun’s muzzle finally aimed at the stiffened soldier. Again, his body shook, and with an unbecoming expression he started to plead for his life.

“I, I ask you! Please don’t kill me! I, I’ll do anything! Please!”

“Is that so? Then. tell me what happened to the other RabbitMans. Even though there should be a lot of them… …have they been transported to the empire?”

What Hajime tried to ask was, it takes time for hundred people along with RabbitMans to move around, so it’ll be okay to help them on the way if they are near. Well, if they are already arrived at the empire then there is no need to purposely help them.

“… Wi-will you spare me if I tell you?”

“You, did you think you’re in any position to ask me? Well, it’s not like I need those information. Should I kill you now?”

“Ple-please wait! I will say it! I will say it! … They are probably have been transported, because we already reach the quota…”

The “quota”, in other word those who won’t sell, such as elderly was killed. Hearing that word, bitter expression appear on RabbitMans’ faces. Hajime take a peek at their expression. Immediately he glance back at the soldier, in his eyes killing intent can be seen.

“Wait! Please wait! I will tell you anything! About the empire or anything you want! So please!”

Having noticed his killing intent, the soldier desperately plead for his life. And, answer his plead was…

DOPANn!

One bullet.

At this all of RabbitMans hold their breath. Added that, Hajime’s completely unforgiving behaviour. Fear appear in some of them. Who know if Shia also feel the same, she timidly ask him.

“I-isn’t okay to just overlook that person…”

Haa? Hajime glance at her with amazed expression and Shia only can mutter “Ugh”. To the one that killed their family members, also tried to enslave them, looks like the RabbitMan tribe can forgive them. When Hajime tried to say something, Yue immediately told them.

“… Once, the weapon was pulled, the result, even if the opponent was strong they’ll be inconvenience sooner or later…”

“Th-tha is…”

“… In the first place, how can you look at Hajime with that kind of eyes even though he protected you…”

“…”

It seems Yue was angry. Even though they are protecting them, she won’t forgive those who harbor negative feeling toward Hajime. Even though it was natural, the RabbitMan tribe can feel their guilt.

“Fumu, Hajime-dono, I apologize. It’s not like we blame you. It just that, for us it was the first time we saw something like that… … that’s right, we are only surprised by it.”

“Hajime-san, I am sorry.”

Having heard Shia and Kam apologize to him representing their tribe, Hajime only waved his hands to tell them not to worry about it.

After that, Hajime go to where the horses and wagons/carriages are then told the RabbitMans to hop on. Even though it take half a day walking to Sea of Trees, since there are horses and wagons/ carriages they should use it. He take out the magic-driven 2 wheeler(bike) from the “treasure warehouse” and link it to one of the wagon/carriage. The party continue their course to Sea of Trees.

Also, Yue use wind magic to drop the empire’s Soldiers’ corpse to the canyon. What lefts are nothing but pool of blood.

Arifureta: Volume 4 Chapter 2

Shia's Feelings and Haltina Sea of Trees

One of 7 Great Dungeons, "Haltina Sea of Trees" where the country of demi-humans Faea Belgaen resided in. Thanks to the magic-driven two wheeler pulling two large carriages and dozens of horses, Hajime and his party able to advance forward with a rather fast pace.

On the two wheeler, Hajime sit behind Yue, while Shia is sit behind him. At first, Shia was told to ride on the carriage, but she insisted to get on the two wheeler. Even though Yue keep beating her, but she keep clinging just like a zombie and finally Yue give up. Shia who finally meet two people that "same" as her, seems wanted to talk about various things. She keep hugging Hajime. It seems Shia like to sit behind Hajime on the two wheeler… and sometime she flail her limbs around! that's what Yue think.

Hajime who was sandwiched between ill-humored Yue and good-humored Shia, only absentmindedly drive the two wheeler.

In that state, Hajime heard Yue's voice.

"… … Hajime, why did you fight by yourself?"

"N?"

Yue was talking about the fight with empire's Soldiers. At that time, after stopping her from using magic, Hajime fought them alone. Even though there'd be no much differences other than Yue "Instant Kill" the Soldiers, she thought Hajime was too eager to fight alone, and that made Yue anxious.

"N~,well, I just wanted to confirm…"

"… … confirm?"

Yue asked him with doubtful face. Shia also start to feel intrigued over his shoulder.

"Aa, that was…"

What Hajime said basically this.

First, Hajime stopped Yue because he wanted to fight the empire's Soldiers as an "experiment". Even though it looks like he head-shot all of them, actually he also shot at their armors. Why he did that, because to fight humans using railgun is completely overkill, it'd be too dangerous to use it in town or wherever they are because of its penetrating power. Though there is no problem to turn thugs into dust, it'd penetrate into residence housing and killed whoever inside! something like that, like a complete scum. For Hajime, he didn't want to become someone who indiscriminately kill unrelated people. So, it was necessary to measure the proper amount of power. After looking at the result of

this experiment, he'll be able to fine-tuning it.

The other reason was to confirm whether there'd hesitation for him to kill humans. Even though he was changedeborn, he have not experience in killing human yet. Therefore, he tried to see his reaction before and after killing those Soldiers. The result is, "he didn't feel anything about it". As expected, if they are enemies then he can kill them without mercy.

"And well, even though it was my first murder, when I think that I've changed because I didn't feel anything about it, it make me somewhat sentimental…"

"… … that… Are you okay?"

"Aah, there is no problem. This is the current me, I am just glad that I'll be able to fight properly from now on."

Having heard Hajime's story, Shia was surprised that it was his first murder. At the same time, she admired Yue who was able to noticed the slight change on Hajime (probably only limited to Hajime). And once again, she felt a little lonely because she still doesn't know anything about them.

"Un, that! Can I hear more about Hajime-san and Yue-san?"

"? Aren't we talking about it now."

“Ah, what I want to know wasn’t about your skill but something like why are you inside the Abyss? or what are your objectives? or what have you done until now? I want to know more about you two.”

“… … after you heard it, what then?”

“Even if you ask that, I just want to know. … … I, because of my circumstance, have brought a lot of trouble to my family. I disliked it so much when I was a child… … but of course everyone told me to not mind it and now I don’t hate myself anymore… … even so, I still feel I was an oddball in this world… Therefore, I was happy. When I met the two of you, to find someone with similar existence as me and to know that I’m not alone, this overflowing feeling was… … although it was selfish of me, t-to w-wanted becoming your companion… … that’s why, that, can you tell me more about the two of you… … whatever you can tell me…”

It seems Shia was embarrassed by her own words, her voice became smaller and she tried to hide behind Hajime’s back. When Hajime and Yue think of when they meet Shia for the first time, they remember how incredibly happy she was. At that time, Yue was having complex feelings, immediately they tried to save Haulia tribe from the attacking demonic beasts and she found out how they are capable of using magic inside the canyon. Surely, Shia must have been felt anxious since then.

Surely, in this world, those who have the same constitution as demonic beast won’t be accepted. It was not impossible to have a sense of camaraderie. Though that was said, for Hajime and Yue, there exist no sense of camaraderie. But… because it’ll take some

time until they arrived at the Sea of Trees, also because there are nothing to hide and when they think it'll be good to kill some times, Hajime and Yue start to tell their story.

And the result is…

"Ue, sob… cruel, how cruel~, Hajime-san and Yue-san have it hard~. Co-compared to that, I was blessed… Uu~, I didn't lack anything at all~"

She cried. While crying sometime "I was too naive" or "I won't complain anymore" can be heard. Then, naturally, she wipe her face using Hajime's overcoat. Apparently, she thought her circumstance was worst but compared to Hajime and Yue's circumstances, it seems she felt miserable about herself to think that way.

After crying for a while, suddenly Shia clasp her fist and with resolute expression she declared.

"Hajime-san! Yue-san! I have decided! I'll join your travel! From now on, this Shia Haulia under this sun promised to help the two of you! There is no need to be reserved. The tree of us are comrades. Let's overcome the hardship and find the hope together!"

To Shia's sudden declaration, Hajime and Yue only give her a cold look.

“What were the weak and need to be protected rabbit just said? You’ll only be a hindrance.”

“… … casually changing from “I want to be a comrade” into “comrade”… Shameless rabbit.”

“Wh-why the cold look?… … aren’t you moved… now that you mention it, please properly call me by my name.”

Shia was shaking because her eagerness resulted in their cold look. And additional blow was given.

“… … you, aren’t you simply want someone to become your travel companion?”

“!?”

Shia was shocked by his words.

“Once your tribe safety is secured, you, you wanted to stay away from them, right? And come good situation that we who was the “same” showed up, have you decided to go with us? Well, of course having that unusual hair color for a RabbitMan would make it hard to travel alone.”

“… … umm, that, even if you say that… … I only wanted to…”

Maybe because it hit the bull's eye, Shia stuttered her word. The truth was she already determined that once she gained Hajime's cooperation and her tribe safety was secured she will leave them. Because as long as she was there, her tribe will be always in dangers. Even now a lot of tribe members were lost. Who know next they will likely be annihilated. Shia was unable to endure it. Of course, her tribe didn't think so and it'll only look like she betrayed her tribe. But, "even with that" she already decided it.

At worst, she'll go alone, but that'd make her tribe even more worried. On the other hand, if she said it was to repay Hajime and Yue who have overwhelming strength, then it will be easier to convince her tribe to let her leave. "Desperation" can be seen in Shia's behavior and speech now.

Of course, it was true that Shia was interested in Hajime and Yue. As Hajime had said when Shia found out Hajime and Yue were "same" as her, she felt strong sense of camaraderie with them. Even when she thinks about her tribe circumstance, it was as if it was "fate" for Shia to met Hajime and Yue.

"Well, it's not like I can blame you to think so. Even so, don't expect anything. Our objective was the Seven Great Dungeons. Most likely the dungeon's interior infested with monster similar to Abyss. You'll be instantly killed and that's the end. Therefore, I won't allow you to go with us"

"… …"

Hajime's relentless word make Shia fell silent. Hajime and Yue who

were unconcerned about it, continue their attacks.

From then on, Shia was quietly sitting on the two wheeler with an expression that was difficult to read.

After several hours, their party finally arrived at the border of “Haltina Sea of Trees”. From the outside of Sea of Trees, they don’t only see the dense forest, but it seems as soon as they entered they’ll be covered by fog.

“Well then, Hajime-dono, Yue-dono. Please don’t ever part from us in here. Even though it was possible for you to advance by yourself, it’ll be a problem if you get lost here. Also, our destination is in the depth of this forest, under the Great Tree right?”

“Aah, I have only heard about it, it seems there is a way to the real dungeon there.”

Kam was confirming Hajime’s destination in the Sea of Trees. What Kam called Great Tree was a huge tree that exist in the depth of “Haltina Sea of Trees”, it also called “Great Tree Ua Alt” by demi-humans, and seems like it become a sacred place that no one dare to approached. It was a story they heard from Kam when they escaped from the canyon.

At first, Hajime thought “Haltina Sea of Trees” was one large dungeon, but when he think that if that was true then the wandering demonic beasts would be as strong as the one inside the Abyss, it would be impossible for demi-humans to live there. Even

for “Orcus Great Dungeon”, they are only able to guessed where is the true entrance. So, he became suspicious when heard about “Great Tree” from Kam.

Kam who nodding at Hajime’s word, signaled to the other tribe members to make formation with Hajime in the center.

“Hajime-dono, if possible please erase your presence. Great Tree was a sacred place so there are no one and it was prohibited to approached it, but there is possibility to encounter someone from Faea Belgaen or other inhabitants(villagers). We are wanted person after all so it’d be a problem if they found us.”

“Aah, I’ll do that. Yue and me are, to some degree, able to do that so it’s okay.”

Hajime use the skill “Hide Presence”. Yue also thinned her presence using the method she create in Abyss.

“-!? This is… … Hajime-dono, if it’s possible, can you adjust it to the same as Yue-dono?”

“N? … … something like this?”

“Yes, that is enough. If you hide it as much as a while ago, even we will lose sight of you. No, ah, as expected of you!”

In the first place, although their specs are lower, RabbitMan tribe excel in stealth operation and search operation using sound. And it seems, Yue's skill for hiding her presence that she create in the Abyss was quite excellence to use it on the surface. However, Hajime "Hide Presence" skill was more powerful. If it was at typical place, they'll be able to find him, but inside Sea of Trees, even with RabbitMan tribe's specialty they might be unable to find him.

Having her tribe's specialty surpassed by humans, Kam can only smile wryly. Beside him, Yue was proudly puffed up her chest. Shia was complexed. Probably because of the difference in ability that Hajime just show.

"Then, shall we go?"

Under Kam's words, their party start to advance, Kam and Shia head into Sea of Trees with complex feelings (deppressed).

After a while, they are unable to see the road anymore. Immediately thick fog surround them and their sight was cut off. However, there is no hesitation in Kam's steps. He seems to completely understand their location and direction to take. Although it was not known why, demi-humans and only demi-humans were able to understand their current location and accurately move around the Sea of Trees.

While advancing, suddenly Kam and his tribe stopped and began to look around their surrounding. There are demonic beasts' presences. Naturally, Hajime and Yue also can feel it. Apparently they are surrounded by demonic beasts. The RabbitMan tribe pick the knives that given by Hajime when they entered the Sea of

Trees. If it was the normal, they'll just escape with their ability, but they can't do it now. Tense expression appear on all of the tribe members.

And, suddenly Hajime quickly shook his left hand. Faintly sound of something flew (PASHu) echoes in succession.

Immediately,

DOSA-, DOSA-, DOSA-

“”” KIiiii!?”””

Scream can be heard along with the three sounds of collapsing. And, panic can be felt coming from the fog area, three monkey-like creatures with height around 60 cm and four arm each can be seen moving around.

Yue hold up her hand aiming at one of them then mutter in whisper-like voice.

“”Wind Blade””

Having said the name of her magic, wind of blade appear and rushed toward, without any resistance that monkey-look-a-like was slashed apart in the air. Without any chance to scream that monkey-look-a-like fall to the ground.

The other two was moving separately. One of them approached a child, while the other aimed its four arms equipped with sharp claw toward Shia. Shia and the child were instinctively stunned and unable to move. Meanwhile, the nearby adults were yelling…
… but that was just baseless worry.

Once again, Hajime shook his left arm and PASHuu! sound can be heard then the head of the monkey-look-a-like that tried to approach Shia and the child struck with countless number of 10 cm long needles.

What Hajime just used was Needlegun that's equipped on his artificial left arm. He got the hint from "Scorpion-look-a-like" that he fought before, then create the Needlegun. To fired it he used "Lightning-clad" though it was not at the level of Donner-Schlag but it has enough power. Even though it only have range of 10 m, it was silent, and added with poison it became convenient to use. It can be said it was one of dark-weapon series. Because they are inside the Sea of Trees and they didn't wanted to attract attention, Donner-Schlag can't be used.

"Th-thank you, Hajime-san"

"Onii-chan, thanks!"

Shia and the child (boy) thanked him. Hajime gesture them not to worry about it. The boy look at him with sparkling eyes, while Shia suddenly dropped her shoulders because she can do nothing but stunned in such times.

Kam only wryly smiled at her. They continued to guide him after being urged by Hajime.

Afterward, even though some demonic beasts come to attack them, Hajime and Yue quietly dealt them. The demonic beasts of the Sea of Trees, who were considered as troublesome by the mass, were not a problem for them.

However, after several hours passed since they enter the Sea of Trees, innumerable presences that can't be compared to before can be felt, Hajime and his party stopped their advance. Their killing intent and teamwork can't be compared to the demonic beasts they encounter before. Kam and his tribe start to restlessly search for their location.

And then, a worried and lose expression appear on their face while they gripped their hand. As for Shia, her face became pale.

Hajime and Yue who noticed the other party's identity, feel that it'll be troublesome.

The others was

"You are… … why are you together with humans! Tell us from what tribe are you now!"

It was muscular demi-humans with ears and tails similar to a tiger.

Arifureta: Volume 4 Chapter 3

Haulia was Shameless as Expected

Humans and demi-humans walking together inside the Sea of Trees.

Having seen that, those tiger-like demi-humans looked at Kam and his tribe as if they are traitors. They readied their double-edged sword while taking a stance. Tens of demi-humans come to surround them while emitting killing intent.

“W-we are…”

Kam who drenched in cold-sweat tried to find them some excuse, at the same time the tiger-like demihumans catches a glance at shia then their eyes opened wide.

“Isn’t that… the white-haired RabbitMan? … … bastard… so you are the Haulia tribe… a disgrace to demi-human race! For years, you’ve deceived us to raised that taboo child, and this time you brought humans here! What treason! I won’t hear any excuses! Everyone will be executed here! Everyone ge-!?”

DOPANn!!

At the time the tiger-like demi-human said no more negotiations and tried to command an attack, Hajime's arm moved, a gunshot along with its flash can be heard then something grazed his cheek, leaving traces of gouged trees as it disappear into depth of the forest.

The tiger-like demi-human that was grazed, froze in place unable to understand what happened. If his ears were located at the side just like human's, it surely would have been blown away. Everyone was stunned by the unknown explosive sound added with an attack so fast they are unable to react.

At that place, Hajime's voice can be heard accompanied by an extraordinary pressure. It was the result of special magic called "Pressure" that directly apply physical pressure to the enemy.

"That attack just now, I can fire it tens times in succession. I already knew how many of you that are surrounding us. You're already in my Kill zone"

"Wh,wh… … the chant…"

Without chanting, to be able to fire invisible attack in succession and to know his comrade's location made that tiger-like demi-human stutter unintentionally. To prove that, Hajime easily pull Schlag and aimed at a certain direction. The tiger-like demi-humans subordinate was in that direction. From the fog a sign of unrest can be felt.

"I won't show any mercy to anyone who tries to interfere. Until

they have fulfilled their promise, their lives are under my protection… … don't even think you will get even one of them"

Aside from the pressure, Hajime start to emit his killing intent. The tiger-like demi-humans who was known as thick-headed and war-like were drenched in cold sweat, started to panic and screamed while one of them tried to desperately keep his calm.

(It must be a joke! How, how is this a human! He must be a monster!)

To the tiger-like demi-human who think hard so that he won't lose to the fear, Hajime continued his words while setting up Donner-Schlag.

"However, if you retreat now I won't give chase. If you're not an enemy then there is no reason for me to kill. Well, now choose. Are you gonna be my enemy and meaninglessly annihilated or will you quietly go home?"

The tiger-like demi-human was convinced that the moment he give the order to attack, that flash he saw a while ago will be back. If that happen, there were no chances for them to survive.

The tiger-like demi-human is the captain of the Second Guard of Faea Belgaen. His work was to guard between Faea Belgaen and the surrounding village, it was his pride and resolution in this work to protect his brethren from intruders and demonic beasts. Therefore, it was not easy for him to decide between retreating and his subordinate's lives.

“… … before that, I want to know one thing”

The tiger-like demi-human desperately tried to ask Hajime with his hoarse voice. Hajime urged him to talk with his eyes.

“… … what’s your purpose?”

A straightforward question. However, depending on the answer, he implied that he has the resolution to fight even if it’ll put a risk to his life. For the tiger-like demi-humans, it was impossible for him to let go anyone who tries to hurt demi-humans living in Faea Belgaen and its surrounding villages, so he bravely stared at Hajime with unyielding eyes.

“The depth of the Sea of Trees, I want to go underneath the Great Tree”

“Underneath the Great Tree… you say? For what purpose?”

The tiger-like demihuman thought whether his purpose was trying to enslave demi-humans, but when he heard his purpose was the sacred place “the Great Tree” he can only give out perplexed look. “The Great Tree” for demi-humans was just one of many place inside the Sea of Trees.

“Over there might be where the true entrance to the Great

Dungeon resides. We are traveling to conquer the Seven Great Dungeon. And that is why we employ the Haulia as our guide."

"The real dungeon? Just what are you trying to say? This Sea of Trees is one of the Seven Great Dungeon. The dungeon where no one except the demi-humans can advanced without getting lost."

"Well, that is weird."

"What?"

The tiger-like demi-humans dubiously tried to ask Hajime who confidently declared that.

"For a Great Dungeon, the demonic beasts here are too weak"

"Weak?"

"That's right. For a Great Dungeon's demonic beasts, all of them are suppose to be monstrously strong. At the very least around the level of "Orcus Great Dungeon"'s Abyss. Also…"

"What is it?"

"A Great Dungeons is the place of trial that the "Liberators" left

behind. For demi-humans to easily enter the depth, you said? That can't be called a trial. That's why it's weird for the Sea of Trees itself as a Great Dungeon."

"… …"

The tiger-like demi-humans was unable to hide his confusion after hearing Hajime's words. That was because he was unable to understand what Hajime means. The Sea of Trees' demonic beasts' were weak, "Orcus Great Dungeon"'s Abyss, the Liberators, trial of the dungeon… were something unknown to him. If it was the usual, he will just say it was "nonsense".

But, now, in this place, what Hajime said was appropriate. For Hajime who capable to overwhelming them, there is no need to make any excuses. In addition, his words itself strangely made them convinced. The truth is if his objective really was the Great Tree not the demi-humans or Faea Belgaen, rather than meaninglessly throwing his subordinates' life, it was better for him to reach his objective then leave.

The tiger-like demi-human already decided that. But, he can't just leave Hajime wander around freely like that. For this matter was already in his hand, therefore the tiger-like demi-human give a proposal to Hajime.

"… … if, you are not planning to harm my country and brethren, I don't care if you go to the Great Tree, that's my decision. There is no meaning to meaninglessly throwing my subordinates' lives after all."

Having heard his words, there were signs of commotion in the surrounding demi-humans. Because he was overlooking human intruders inside the Sea of Trees.

“However, I also need to ask the First Guard’s captain. In addition I must report to my country. The elder might also know something about your story. If that place truly exist or not, until that known, wait here with us.”

While drenched in cold sweat, the tiger-like demi-humans then stared with strong will that can be seen in his eyes and to his words, Hajime tried to think about it.

It was probably the limit for the tiger-like demihumans. It was heard that intruder coming into the Sea of Trees will be killed without the need to talk. Even now, they must still want to punish Hajime and his party. However, his subordinates’ lives will be lost for sure. To avoid it, and for the sake of not letting a potential danger like Hajime loose he made that proposal.

Hajime was a little impressed by his rational judgement under this situation. After comparing the merit between advancing after annihilating them and having permission thus losing the risk of surrounded by Faea Belgaen… he chose the latter. If the Great Tree isn’t the entrance to the Great Dungeon, it was necessary to continue searching for it. In doing so, it was more convenient to have permission from Faea Belgaen. Of course, there is the risk of them becoming hostile, but that is only if there were no other way. It was not a human-like judgment, it was just too troublesome to search while annihilating them.

“… … I accept it. Your words, report them without any distortion,

okay?”

“Of course. Zam! You heard it right! Report it to the elders!”

“Yes, sir!”

Under the tiger-like demi-human’s command, one of the presence was gone. After confirming that, Hajime return Donner-Schlag into their holsters on his thighs while releasing his “Pressure”. The air become normal. Because of this, the tiger-like demi-human who previously looked at Hajime dubiously start to relax while feeling relieved. In their mind, “If it is now!” was the thing some of the demi-humans thought while ready to attack. Hajime who noticed that only fearlessly laughed while giving them a glance.

“Between your attack and mine… do you want try it?”

“… … well. Don’t make any sudden movement you know. We just can’t help but react to it.”

“I know.”

Even though they are still surrounded, finally they arrived at conclusion, Kam and his tribe finally able to sigh in relieved. However, the glance turned to them, a more severe and evil than the one directed at Hajime.

For a while, the oppressive atmosphere filled their surrounding, but maybe because they got tired of it, Yue began to tried to take care of Hajime. Shia who sees their harmony, finally unable to take it then mutter “Me too～”, Hajime can only reveal a forced smile, and the atmosphere start to soften. Inside the enemy territory, suddenly they began to flirt (from demi-humans’ perspective), Hajime can feel their amazed glance pierced at him.

After around one hour. Shia was, currently have her joint locked by Yue saying “Give! I give up～! ” while desperately tap her hand, while the surrounding demi-humans watched them with half-amazed and half-warm gaze, then presences can be felt approaching them quickly.

Tension start to appear again. While Shia was feeling the pain in her joint.

From the fog, several new figures of demi-humans appear. The elderly man who was in the middle especially attracted their attention. Beautifully flowing blonde hair along with his blue eyes that show great knowledge, his body was thin, as if it’ll blow along with the wind. To that dignified appearance, some wrinkles was carved, but that contrast only accentuate his beauty. Above all of that, his ear was long and pointed. He was from the Forest tribe (the so called Elf).

Instantaneously, Hajime guessed he was the existence that was called “Elder”. That guess was right on the spot.

“Fumu, are you that human? What is your name?”

“Hajime. Nagumo Hajime. You?”

Having heard Hajime’s words, the surrounding demi-humans was like “how dare you treat elder like that!” and their resent can be seen. With one hand the man from the Forest tribe calm them down and start to introduced himself.

“I am Alfrerick Hypist. One of elder of Faea Belgaen. Well then, I have heard your request but… before that, I have something to ask. Where did find out about the “Liberators”?”

“Un? From the Abyss of Orcus Great Dungeon, one of Liberators, Oscar Orcus’s hideout.”

Without any purpose, Hajime answered Alfrerick who seems to be interested in the word Liberators. On his side, Alfrerick was astonished although it wasn’t shown on his face. The reason is the word Liberator and Oscar Orcus’ name, only known by some of the elders.

“Fumu, from the Abyss huh… … I haven’t heard it for a long time… … can you prove it?”

Alfrerick asked Hajime that question because there is a possibility where the information was leaked by the upper layer of demi-human. Hajime reveal a difficult expression. Because even though he was told to prove it, he can only show his strength. Yue while tilted her head give Hajime a suggestion.

“… … Hajime, what about Orcus’ relic such as magic stone?”

“Aah! That’s right, if it was that…”

With “Pon” he clasped his hand, and he took out the magic stone with quality that was unobtainable the surface demonic beasts from the “Treasure Box”, then passed it to Alfrerick.

“Th-this is… Magic stone with such purity, I have never seen…”

Even though Alfrerick hide his surprise, the demi-human next to him unintentionally raised his surprised voice.

“Now, this. Once it was ring that used by Orcus…”

As he said it, he showed him Orcus’ ring. Having seen the symbol carved into the ring, Alfrerick eyes were wide opened. And he start to breath slowly to control to his emotion.

“Indeed… … certainly, you have reached Oscar Orkus’ hideout. Even though there are other think I want to ask… … alright. For now it’s okay for you to come to Faea Belgaen. Aah, of course Haulia too.”

Having heard Alfrerick’s words, not only the surrounding demi-humans but also Kam and his Haulia tribe was surprised. Led by the tiger-like demi-human, they started to protest furiously. Well,

that's only natural. One of it was because of humans were invited into the Faeea Belgaen.

"They must be treated as guest. Well they are qualified for that. Also, this is one of the rule that's been decided by the one with elder's seat."

Alfrerick calmed the surrounding with his stern look. However, this time Hajime was the one who protested.

"Wait. Why the hell did you decided my schedule? I am going to the Great Tree, also I have no interest on Faea Belgaen. If there are no others questions, then I'll go to the Great Tree now."

"Well, did you know. That is impossible."

"What did you say?"

In the end, are you going to interfere? is what Hajime thought, but it make Alfrerick look perplexed.

"The fog around the Great Tree is especially thick, even demi-human will be lost there. But there are cycle when the fog become thinner, that's why you should go there at that time. The next time you can go will be in 10 days. … … even though it was supposed to be known by all of the demi-humans…"

Alfrerick was looking at Hajime saying, “To go there in such time, what were you think?” then Kam the guide was seen. Hajime who heard this fact finally understood and just like Alfrerick stared at Kam. Speaking of Kam…

“Ah”

Exactly, he looks like he just remember it. A vein appear on Hajime.

“Kam?”

“Ah, well, what can I say… … look, a lot has happened, I just forgot about it… I’ve only been there when I was a child, so I was not aware about the cycle…”

Kam who desperately tried to find an excuses start to become flustered, because they can’t take it Hajime and Yue stared at him intently and they became blame the others.

“Eei, Shia, the others too! Why, you are telling us the way! You know about the cycle right!”

“Wh, father, that’s misplaced anger! I was, because father was so confidence, so I thought the cycle must be near… … in other words, it’s father’s fault~!”

“That’s right, even we, Huh? Isn’t that weird? think that, but the chief was so confident about it, so we thought it was our that wrong…”

“Chief, it was because you’re to excited about a random thing…”

Kam who was blamed by Shia who also blamed, while the other RabbitMans try to avert their eyes and casually push the responsibility to other.

“Y-you lot! Is that how family is! This, that, that is! Joint responsibility! Hajime-dono, not only me but please punish all of us!”

“Ah, how dirty! Father is dirty～! Because it’s scary to be punished alone, you tried to drag others!”

“Chief! Please don’t involve us!”

“Idiot! On our way, you’re already see how Hajime-dono is. I absolutely don’t want to be punished alone!”

“You, how can you call yourself a chief!”

RabbitMan tribe was known to have the greatest affection compared to other demi-humans. They are noisily tried to push the responsibility to the other. Just where did their affection go… … as

expected of Shia's family. All of them were shameless rabbits.

With a vein appear, Hajime muttered a word.

"… … Yue"

"N"

Having heard Hajime, Yue take a step forward then hold out her right hand. Having noticed that the Haulia tribe's expression cramped.

"Wa, please wait, Yue-san! If you want to do it just take it to father!"

"Ha Ha ha, we'll always be together!"

"The hell with together!"

"Yue-dono, please only hit the chief!"

"It's not my fault, it's not my fault, the one at fault was the chief!"

To the Haulia tribe who was in chaos, Yue quietly muttered.

“‘Storm Emperor'”

—— Agh——!!!

Those rabbit-ears were flown to the sky. Their screams echoes in the Sea of Trees. Even though their brethren was attacked, Alfrerick and the surrounding demi-humans weren’t mad at all. In fact, they looked at the sky with amazement. From their expression, it seems Haulia tribe’s shamelessness was widely known.

Arifureta: Volume 4 Chapter 4

Elders' Conference

They advance in the dense fog guided by Gil, the tiger-like demi-human.

Their destination is Faea Bergaen. They have walked for an hour with Hajime, Yue, Haulia tribe, and Alfrerick surrounded by the other demi-humans. Apparently, Zam the messenger was using a lot of instant movement.

After walking for a while, they suddenly arrived at a place where the fog was cleared up. Although not all of the fog cleared up, it formed a road that resembled a tunnel inside the fog. If you looked closely, crystals as big as fists were buried at the side of the road that give of blue light. It seems to have the ability to ward off the fog.

Alfrerick who noticed Hajime was focused on the blue crystals starts to explain.

"That was something called Faeadrain crystal. Even though we don't know the reason, fog and demonic beasts won't come near it. It was also used to surround Faea Belgaen and its surrounding villages. Well, it was "relatives" for the demonic beasts."

“I see. Well, it’ll be depressing to be inside the fog all the time. At the very least I would want to dispel the place where I live.”

It seems there won’t be any fog in the town inside the Sea of Trees. It was a good news because they had to wait for ten days inside the Sea of Trees. Yue, who feels the fog is depressing, seems happy after hearing the conversation of the two.

In the meantime, before their eyes a huge gate can be seen. It was made by thick trees intertwined forming an arch, while a pair of wooden doors were placed at a span of 10 meters. The natural wall of trees were there at the minimum height of 30 meters. It gave off the magnificence suitable for demi-human’s “country”.

Gil gave the signal to the demi-humans who seems to be the gatekeepers then the gate opened slightly with heavy sound. From the top of surrounding trees, piercing glances were directed at Hajime and the others. It seems they can’t hide their agitation for the fact that humans were coming. Without Alfrerick, they’ll surely get into trouble with only Gil’s assistance. Perhaps, the Elder came out by himself after predicting that this would happen.

After passing through the gate, there was a different world. There are lot of huge trees with diameter of tens meter, inside the tree was the dwelling and from opened space of tree trunk that looks like windows was overflowed with light of lamps. Dozens of people can be seen walking on the corridors made of thick intertwined branches of trees. On the big vines of trees, there are elevator-like things using the pulley also there huge wooden waterway that set up to hang between trees. The trees itself has the height around 20 stories.

Hajime and Yue were mesmerized with open mouth, fascinated by the beautiful cityscape, the sound of cough “gohon” were heard. Apparently, they didn’t notice that they are stopping Alfrerick tried to bring back their consciousness.

“Fufu, it seems you’ve taken a liking to our hometown, Faea Belgaen.”

Alfrerick loosened his expression in joy. The surrounding demi-humans including Haulia tribe looked somehow proud of it. Hajime who saw their appearance, honestly praised the city.

“Aa, it’s my first time to see such beautiful town. The atmosphere is good, truly a town which splendidly harmonizes with nature.”

“N… … beautiful”

Having heard such straightforward praised without any falsehood, as expected, it made the demi-humans a little surprised. However, having their hometown praised surely made them happy, all of them, tried to avert their face with a “hmpf” while their beast-ears and tails were vigorously moves.

The residents of Faea Belgaen were looking at Hajime and his party with curiosity and avoidance, there are various gazes filled with hatred or perplexity, while they continued to go toward the place that Alfrerick had prepared.

* * *

"… … I see, trial to gain age of gods magic, also about the gods' game…"

Currently, Hajime and Yue are talking to Alfrerick. The topics were about "Liberators" and the age of gods magic that Hajime heard from Oscar Orcus, also about how he was from different world and is trying to complete the Seven Great Dungeon so that he can get the age of gods magic that able to return him to his world.

Having heard about this world's gods, there is no change in Alferick's expression. Hajime who thinks it was strange then asked "This world doesn't treat demi-humans well, even now" was the answer he heard. It seems even if the gods didn't got mad, the treatment to demi-humans wouldn't have changed at all. This place weren't under the influence of the church neither they have any faith. There is only the appreciation of nature.

After Hajime's stories were finished, Alfrerick start to talk about laws of the Elder position of Faea Belgaen. It was an oral tradition that is if someone who bore the crest of Seven Great Dungeons appeared then don't be hostile to them, and if that person were liked then take them to their destination.

The creator of Great Dungeon of "Haltina Sea of Trees" were called Luluo Haltina, the existence who called herself as "Liberators" (she didn't told them what kind of beings "Liberators" was) also she told them the name of her comrades. It was endlessly told the one tribe that lived before this country was named Faea Belgaen. They must not be hostile because it was advised they must know that those who passed the trial of Great Dungeon are someone who have

extraordinary abilities.

Also, Alrerick was able to reacted to the crest of Orcus' ring because there is a stone monument in which seven crests were carved at the root of the Great Tree where he saw the same crest as that one.

"That means, I've passed the qualification…"

From Alfrerick's explanation, the reason to invite human into the stronghold of demi-humans has been understood. However, not all of the demi-humans knows of this story, so it was necessary to tell them in the future.

When Hajime and Alfrerick tried to end their talk, somehow it became noisy downstair. Hajime and the others were currently on the top floor, while Shia and the Haulia tribe were downstair. Apparently, they are arguing against someone. Hajime and Alfrerick looked at each other then stood up at the same time.

Downstair, there were a big bear-like demi-human, a tiger-like demi-human, a fox-like demi-human, a demi-human with wings growing out of their back, and a hairy dwarf-like demi-human who looked insecure were glaring at Haulia tribe. In the corner of the room, Kam was desperately covering Shia. It seems they've already been hit because Shia and Kam cheeks were swollen.

Hajime and Yue who have came downstair sent sharp glare to all of them. The bear-like demi-humans began to speak with an insecure voice.

“Alfrerick… … you bastard, what’s the meaning of this. Why did you invite those humans? Those RabbitMan tribe too. To have the taboo child come here… … according to your answer, I will strip you of your seat in the Elders conference.”

He seems to desperately restrain his fury. His fists that clasped were trembling. As expected, for demi-humans, humans were their nemesis. Moreover, to invited the Haulia tribe who bore crime of sheltering the taboo child. Not only the bear-like demi-humans, the other demi-humans are staring at Alfrerick.”

However, Alfrerick only think that as wind blowing.

“What, I just followed the tradition. All of you are also Elders of various tribes, shouldn’t you able to understand the circumstance?”

“The hell with tradition! Aren’t those kind of things fake? Even after Faea Belgaen was founded, not even once that happened!”

“Therefore, this time is the first time. That’s all. If you are Elders then followed the tradition. That’s the law. We are the one who have the Elder seat so why would we disregard the law.”

“Then, are you saying that those human youngsters are qualified! The one who so strong that we shouldn’t be hostile with!”

“That’s so”

Alfrerick only answered in indifferent. The bear-like demi-humans can’t believe Alfrerick’s words, then stare at Hajime.

In Faea Belgaen, those who become the Elder of various tribes are those who have high ability, and it seems the Elders Conference were council system used to decide the policy of this country where the Elders performs judgement in trial-like manner. Currently, those demi-humans who gathered here were apparently the current Elders. However, there seems to be a difference in the way they see the tradition.

Although Alfrerick was the type that took the importance of tradition, the other elders might be a little different. Alfrerick was from the Forest tribe, even among demi-humans they have longer lifespan. According to Hajime memory, their average lifespan were around 200 years. If that is so, there is a very large age difference between Alfrerick and the Elders in front of him, in effect, there might also be a difference in their sense of value. By the way, the average lifespan of demi-humans were 100 years.

Because of it, the other Elders beside Alfrerick were unable to endure having humans and criminals in this place.

“… … then, right now, let me test you!”

Having finished his word, the bear-like demi-human suddenly rushed toward Hajime. Because of the suddenness, the others can’t react. Alfrerick too, who didn’t think he’ll attack suddenly, was

widen his eyes in surprise.

And in an instant he get in his range, the man who was 2 and half meter with great arms made of lump of muscle, swung his arm toward Hajime.

Even among demi-humans, Bearman tribe were superior in physical and endurance. That great arm was able to break a big tree into two, this destructiveness was the clear distinction that made him the representative of his tribe. Aside from Haulia tribe and Yue, the others were visioning there'd be nothing left of Hajime except lump of flesh.

However, in the next moment, they are frozen because of the impossible spectacle.

ZUDONn!

The fist that swung down and produced a sound of impact were easily grabbed and stopped by Hajime's left arm.

"… … what a lukewarm fist. However, there was killing intent. So, you've prepared, right?"

While saying so, Hajime manipulate his artificial arm using magic to increase his grip. The sound of bear-like demi-human's bones cracking can be heard. Sensing his crisis although he was still surprised, the bear-like demi-human desperately tried to distance

himself.

“Guuu! Let go!”

Even though he desperately tried to pull his arm, Hajime who was around half big as him didn’t move an inch. Actually, at that time, Hajime transmute metal plate on his shoes into spike that drilled into the floor to secure his position, the bear-like demi-human who didn’t know that only can feel Hajime was like an immovable big tree.

Hajime silently pour his magic, then the grip of his artificial arm increased at once.

BAKI!

“Gh!?”

Sound of something broken come from the arm of the bear-like demihuman. Even so there is no scream that can be heard just as expected of an Elder. However, Hajime didn’t missed him became stiffen in pain and astonishment.

His free left arm then thrusted with a Karate-like chop, Hajime immediately dashed into the bear-like demi-human’s bosom.

“Fly”

DOPANn!

His “powerful arm” activated and gunshot came from his artificial arm that moved with a thrust. And, at the same time impact were generated from part of the elbow while a cartridge jumped out and flutter in the air. The fist that already strong to begin with were accelerated to increase the destructive power.

The fist that used mechanism to give it tremendous power were piercing the belly of the bear-like demi-human without mercy, while at the same time it generated shock wave and literally blown him off with full power. The bear-like demi-human, without even a chance to scream, with his body bent into < shape disappeared after break through the wall. After a while, scream can be heard from the ground.

What Hajime used was a shotgun that can be fired from his elbow. The propulsion was possible by using the recoil of shot shell that was built-in, also while shooting Schlag he can use it to shot enemy in the back at the same time. This time the propulsion was used. His “powerful arm” demonstrated its full power.

While everyone stunned and at loss for words, sound of GASHUN! that come out from operating the gimmick can be heard then Hajime look at the other Elders with killing intent.

“Well? Are you my enemies?”

To that words, no one was able to nod.

After Hajime blown off the bear-like demi-human, Alfrerick somehow manage to intercede, so the trampling play by Hajime was avoided. The bear-like demi-human's internals were ruptured along with almost all of his bone fractured, but it seems his life was saved. Using the most expensive recovery medicine (spending money like a faucet). However, his life as a warrior were finished…

Currently, the Elders, Zell of Tigerman tribe, Mao of Wingedman tribe, Rua of Foxman tribe, Guze of Earthman tribe (commonly called Dwarf), and Alfrerick of Forestman tribe were seated opposite of Hajime. Yue and Kam seated beside Hajime, Shia was seated along the other Haulia tribe clustered behind him.

Expression of Elders, except Alfrerick, were stiff with tension. The bear-like demi-human (called Jin) who had battle prowess of number 1 or 2 was unable to attend because he was instant-killed so neither his hands nor feet can be used.

"Well? What do you want to do with us? I only wanted to go to underneath the Great Tree, if you don't interfere then I will leave you alone… … the demi-humans was < < … > > thinking if they don't unite their intention then when the time come, won't they be troubled if they don't know which is good? For your information. In the middle of massacre, to consider the distinction between enemies and allies, I am not that kind of good natured person you know."

Having heard Hajime's words, the Elders were stunned. They have noticed that it was implied he won't hesitate to start war against the demi-humans.

“For our incapacitated companion’s sake, first of all this is… … is it possible for us to become friendly?”

Guze muttered with groan along with bitter and crushed expression.

“Huh? What did you say? Aren’t that bear the one who came with killing intent? I was only pay him back. Resulted with him became incapacitated was his own fault.”

“Y-you! Jin was! Jin was only thinking of his country!”

“And, is that why it’s okay to kill someone he met for the first time without talk first?”

“Th-that was! But!”

“Didn’t you misunderstand? I am the victim while that bear is the assailant. Aren’t Elders must judge the crime? Then, that’s why, aren’t that Elder of your the one who made mistake?”

Probably Guze was gotten along well with Jin. Therefore, though he understand in his head that Hajime was right but he was unable to accept it. However, to consider his feeling was not something Hajime would do.

“Guze, though I understood how you feels, but leave it at that. His is a sound argument.”

Having heard Alfrerick’s word of admonishment, Guze who tried to stand up was “DOSUNn” sit down with distorted expression. And currently, he fall into silent sullen.

“This boy, certainly, has one of the crest, his ability also made him able to completed a Great Dungeon. I have admitted that he has the qualification as said in the tradition.”

The one who said that was Elder Rua of Foxman tribe. After his slit eyes looked at Hajime, he looked at other Elders asking what they think.

Having received his gaze, Mao of Wingedman tribe and Zel of Tigerman tribe even though it wasn’t known what they think, they give their consent. On the others behalf, Alfrerick tell Hajime.

“Nagumo Hajime. We of Elder council admitted that you’re a person qualified as said in tradition. Therefore, it is our consensus to not oppose you… … as much as possible, I’ll told them to not lay a hand on you. … … however… …”

“It was not absolute… huh?”

“Aah. As you’ve known, demi-humans don’t think well of humans. Honestly, it can be said that they hate them. The is possibility of

someone disregarding the notice from Elders conference. Especially, the tribe of the incapacitated Jin, the Bearman tribe's anger can't easily be suppressed so there is a high possibility of it. He is popular after all… …"

"So?"

Hajime's expression didn't change even after heard Alfrerick's words. What's done is done, He only do what should be done, it can be understood from his eyes. Alfrerick who can understand that, he look back with the will of an Elder.

"I want you spare those who attack you."

"… … are you asking me to take it easy at those who came with killing intent?"

"That's right. Isn't that possible with your power?"

"If it was someone with ability around the level of that bear, I can't say for sure. However, I won't take it easy when killing each other. Although I understand your feeling, I can't relate to your circumstances. If you don't want your brethren to died, then seriously stop them."

It was something he cultivated in the Abyss, sense of values to kill it if it was enemies were deeply ingrained in Hajime's mind. Even he doesn't know what will happen when killing each other happen.

If he take it easy, even cornered mouse can mortally wound the cat. Therefore, Hajime can't accept Alfrerick's request.

However, Zel of Tigerman tribe intervent.

"Then, we, let us refused to guide you to underneath the Great Tree. Even though it was tradition, there is no need to guide someone which we didn't like."

Having heard his words, Hajime was dumbfounded. From the beginning, he was leave it to Haulia tribe to guide him and there is no intention to seek help from anyone in Faea Belgaen. Even they surely know about that. However, Zel's next words clarified his intention.

"I don't think Haulia tribe will be able to guide you. They are criminals. They'll be judged by Faea Belgaen's rule. Although we don't know what had happened, you will be separated here. Their crime was to harbored the child who has the same power as demonic beasts. It was the same as exposing Faea Belgaen into danger. Their execution has already decided in Elders Conference."

Shia was trembling in tears having heard Zel's words, while Kam and his tribe were already thoroughly resigned. Even now, no one blame Shia, that's just how depth their affection is.

"Honored Elders! Somehow, somehow please let my tribe go! Please!"

“Shia! Stop it! We are already prepared. It was not your fault. No one wanted to stay alive so much to the point of selling out a family’s member. It was already talked many times in the Haulia tribe. There is nothing for you to worry about.”

“But, Father!”

Even though Shia desperately beg while prostrating, no words of pardon come from Zel.

“It has already decided. All of Haulia tribe will be executed. Even though if you didn’t escape from Faea Belgaen, it’ll only ended with banishment from harboring the taboo child.”

Shia who cried was comforted by Kam and the others. The decision been decided in Elders Conference was the truth. The other Elders didn’t say anything. Probably because it was a taboo child, to kept concealing such factor of danger in Faea Belgaen made their crime heavy. It also can be said their strong feelings for their family worsen the situation. It was an ironic story.

“And that’s it. With this, aren’t your method to go to the Great Tree were gone? What will you do? Will you leave it to luck to reach it?”

Zel was implying that they should accept the demand if they don’t want that. The other Elders of council also didn’t give any objection. However, Hajime who didn’t even show any bitterness in his expression, told him back as if it was nothing.

“You, are you an idiot?”

“Wh-what!”

Zel raised his eyes having heard Hajime’s objection. Shia and her tribe also looked at Hajime in reflex. Yue who understand what Hajime was thinking only keep a clarifying face.

“As I said, I can’t relate to your circumstance. If you want to take them from me, then you are trying to obstruct my way after all.”

Hajime who glared at the Elders, reach out his hand and put it on the crying Shia’s head. Having surprised by it, Shia look up at Hajime.

“If you want, to take them away from me… … I hope you’re prepared.”

“Hajime-san…”

What Hajime mean by that was he won’t forgive anyone who tried to obstruct him anymore than this. However, still, for the sake of Haulia tribe he won’t hesitate to wage war against Faea Belgaen, the stronghold of demi-humans, that resolution, was piercing into Shia whose heart already sank in despair.

“You are serious, right?”

Alfrerick looked at Hajime with sharp gaze that won’t permit any deceit.

“Obviously”

However, Hajime wasn’t shaken at all. His unyielding resolve can be seen. There is no respect for this world, those who obstructing doesn’t need to be compromised and pardoned. It was his decision that he made in the Abyss.

“Even if I say that there will be guide from Faea Belgaen?”

The execution of Haulia tribe was already decided in Elders Conference. Even more, it’ll will affect the country’s prestige to overturn it by yielding to the threat. Also in the future, the card of guiding can’t be used as bargaining chip because they might attack Hajime and his party because the Elders Conference’s decision can’t be overturned. Therefore, Alfrerick make the proposal. However, Hajime made it clear that there is no more room for negotiation.

“Don’t make me say it again. My guide is Haulia.”

“Tell me the reason, for you to stick to them. If you only wanted to go to the Great Tree then anyone can be your guide.”

To Alfrerick's words, Hajime reveal that it'll be troublesome, while Shia take a peek at him. From a while ago, Shia kept staring at Hajime and their eyes met for a moment. Then she felt her heart slightly throbbed. Even though their eyes met only for a moment, Shia pulse keep rising.

"I've promised to them. I'll help them in exchange for their guide."

"… … promise. If it was that don't you think it was already fulfilled? Haven't you protected them from the demonic beasts of the canyon and the empire's Soldiers? Then, it's only left with the reward to guide you. There won't be any problem if the one who give the reward was different."

"There is one big problem. I've promised to ensure their safety while guiding me. Just because there is better thing on the way, I can't just tossed them aside and substitute them that'll be…"

Hajime cut his words then look at Yue. Yue also looked at Hajime then slightly smile. Having told by Hajime, Alfrerick can only shrugged his shoulders while smiling wryly.

"Uncool right?"

Sneak attack, surprise attack, deceptive attack, cowardice, despicable lie, bluff. When killing each other, Hajime doesn't think those were bad. In order to survive, it was necessary to do that.

However, because of that, other than killing each other he want to protect his honor. If that can't be done truly he won't be no more than a scum. Hajime is also a man. For the girl that he met in the Abyss he wanted to draw that line, to not show any disgraceful behaviour more than needed.

Maybe because he realized what Hajime was thinking, Alfrerick can only let out a deep sigh. The other Elders' face was looked to ask what should they do. For a while, silent wrap them, before long Alfrerick made a proposal with a tired face.

"Then, let make it that they are your slaves. In Faea Belgaen's law, those who gone outside the Sea of Trees and didn't come back, those who catched and made slave, was assumed to have died. Though there is a good chance we can win inside fog of the Sea of Trees, there are person who can use magic outside so we hardly has chance to win. Therefore, we considered they died so that no one come after them and expand the damage. … those who already considered to be dead won't be able to be executed!"

"Alfrerick! That is!"

It was a complete sophism. Naturally, the other Elders' expression turned into "gyo". Zel unintentionally leaned over then raised his protest.

"Zel. You should understand. What that boy shown and his power. If you execute the Haulia tribe then he'll be our enemy. In that case, how many will be sacrificed… … as one of Elders, we must avoided that kind of danger."

“However, what will it show (to the citizen)! If the rumour that we yield to power and let loose a monster child spread, then the Elders Conference’s prestige will surely fall!”

“However…”

Other Elders also joined the discussion between Zel and Alfrerick, the place became full of commotion. As expected, having overlook and let loose the risk factor, then suddenly they can’t punished them was not an easy thing. With the establishment of this bad precedence, the Elders Conference’s prestige will take a fall and there’ll be various speculation such as approval with ulterior motives.

However, inside that (discussion), Hajime made a remark without reading the mood.

“Aah~, even though it’s bad to say it now, isn’t it too late that you realized that you’re not only overlooking Shia?”

Having heard Hajime’s words, their discussion stopped, then the Elders glance at Hajime asking what he mean by that.

Hajime slowly turned over his right arm’s sleeve then he did direct magic manipulation. By doing so, red lines appear on his right arm’s skin. In addition, spark come off from his right hand that use “Lightning-clad”.

The Elders' eyes were opened wide. Because the magic was invoked without chant and magic circle made them startled. They only thought that he was able to defeat Jin because his artificial arm was an artifact.

"I am also the same as Shia who can directly manipulate magic and use unique magic. Next is Yue. She is the one whom you call a monster. However, aren't your tradition said "whatever that person is, don't be hostile to them"? According to your law, you must overlook these monsters. Well it's already too late for Shia though."

Although the Elders was stunned for a while, before long they began to whisper to each other. Because it looks like they've come into conclusion, represented by Alfrerick, he began to report the result of Elders Conference with a big sigh.

"Haa~, Haulia tribe's taboo child, Shia Haulia, was regarded as relative to Nagumo Hajime who is also a taboo child. Therefore, because Nagumo Hajime passed the qualification we won't be hostile to them, but they are forbidden from entering Faea Belgaen and its surrounding villages. Followed by if someone tried to lay their hand on Nagumo Hajime's family then everything will be their own responsibility… … over. Are there anything else?"

"Well, whatever it is as long as I can reach the Great Tree is okay. These guys were my guides, There are no problem"

"… … I see. Then, hurry and leave. Although it hurt our heart to be unable to welcome someone who passed the qualification as stated in our tradition that finally came…"

“Don’t mind it. There is no need to say everything because there will be lot of absurd remarks that I hear. Even so, to have such rational judgement I can only be thankful about it.”

To Hajime’s words, Alfrerick can only smile wryly. The other Elders have bitter and tired expressions. Rather than bitterness and grudge, Quickly go away! was what they had in mind. Having seen that, Hajime shrugged his shoulders then urged Yue, Shia, and her tribe to stood up.

Even though Yue was expressionless from the beginning till the end, having heard their talk she didn’t say anything and only stood up to match Hajime.

However, Shia and the Haulia tribe still didn’t believe it was reality and there is no sign of them standing up in their stunned state. Even though they are prepared to die until a while ago, then strangely in the end it suddenly turn into banishment. “Eh, is it okay for us to leave like this?” that’s the kind of feeling that rolled in their mind.

“Oi, when will you stoppdaydreaming? We must quickly go.”

Having heard Hajime’s words, they finally start to stand up in hurry, then Shia and her tribe follow Hajime who was quickly going outside. Alfrerick and the other Elders send them till the gate.

Shia asked Hajime while flustered.

“U-um, is it okay… for us to stay alive?”

“? Didn’t you hear the talk a while ago?”

“W-well, even though I heard it… … that is, somehow it doesn’t seems to be real to be able to go out of that kind of predicament suddenly… … it makes me feel it was an unbelievable situation…”

Her perplexed expression also shared by the surrounding Haulia tribe. That was because for demi-humans, the decision of Elders Conference is absolute. Yue then talk to Shia who is perplexed that she can’t understand how to process that.

“… … it’s okay to honestly rejoice about it”

“Yue-san?”

“… … Hajime saved you. That’s the truth. It’s okay to just accept and rejoice.”

“… …”

Having heard Yue’s words, Shia glances at Hajime who quietly walks next to her. Hajime then shrugs while facing forward.

“Well, it was a promise.”

“Uh… …”

Shia shoulder was trembling. In exchange to guide inside the Sea of Trees, Shia and her tribe were protected. It was the promise that Shia desperately attached to Hajime. Originally, using “Foresight” she saw the future where Hajime protected her family. However, that future wasn’t absolute. Depending on Shia’s choice of actions, it can change a lot. Because of that, Shia was “desperately” trying to obtain Hajime’s cooperation. The other party was humans who discriminate against demi-human, and Shia didn’t have any fortune to offer. Her negotiation materials were only herself as “woman” and “special ability”. Even so, when it was easily discarded, she almost cried without knowing what else to do.

Even so, she somehow able to get his promise, and while talking on their way she felt that if it was Hajime then he’ll kept it, that kind feeling. That maybe because even though she was a demi-human, she didn’t felt any discriminatory glance. However, it was something she felt “somehow”, it was not something for certain. That’s why because she lose to her anxiousness, he said to the “one who promised to protect” that “even though the enemies were humans”. In fact, when he fight those empire’s Soldiers without any hesitation, it made her so relieved.

However, this time even Shia thought that even if it was Hajime, it wasn’t the same as with those empire’s Soldiers. It can be said it was the same as declaring war in front of the emperor. And the promise was protected without even flinching. Although, even if it was for Hajime himself, as Yue has said, Shia and her precious

family were certainly protected.

Since a while ago, her heart kept throbbing hard. Her face was hot, a mysterious impulse that kept jumping up and down as if something stuck in her throat. Is it the joy because of her family's safety or…

Shia tried to follow Yue's advice to honestly be happy and left her current feeling then entrusted everything to her impulse to make the best of it. That is, she clings to Hajime with full force!

"Hajime-sa~n! Thank you very much~!"

"Uwaa!? What's so sudden!?"

"Mu…"

I absolutely won't be separated even if the bruise will make me cry! that's what Shia said while pressing her face into Hajime's shoulder then starting to rub it. Her expression started to loosen and her cheeks were dyed in pink.

Yue who saw that was groaning in bad mood, when she think about doing something, she only hold Hajime's hand, nothing special was done.

Having seen Shia explode in joy to Hajime, the Haulia tribe finally

understood that they escaped with their life, they started to share the joy to each other.

The Elders can only see them with complex expression. Also, there are many who avert their gaze of hatred and discomfort.

Hajime while understand what was happened, can only smile wryly because for a while he was rolled into a troublesome thing.

Arifureta: Volume 4 Chapter 5

The Only Way to Survive

“Well then, I think I’ll give you some combat training”

Hajime and his party who banished from Faea Belgaen were resting in their temporary base near the Great Tree when he suddenly said that. Even though it was called a base, it was only a barrier made of Faea Drain crystals that… Hajime nonchalantly stole. Inside it while sitting on stumps, those rabbit-ears floated dazed expressions.

“Th-that… Hajime-san. Combat training in other words…”

Shia asked him on behalf of her perplexed clan.

“Just like the words said. Anyway, we can’t reach the Great Tree before ten days passed, right? Then it’s better to effectively use those time, I am thinking to make you whom weak, fragile, and loser nature deeply ingrained in, into someone who excel in combat.”

“Wh-why did you think that…”

The rabbit-ears were trembling from the intimidating feeling that

can be felt from Hajime's eyes and whole body. Shia naturally doubt Hajime's abrupt declaration.

"Why? Did you ask why? Shameless rabbit."

"Au, you still not called me by name…"

Hajime with skeptical eyes explain to the depressed Shia.

"Listen well. The promise that I had with you guys was only to protect you until you done guiding me. Then, what will you do after guiding me, did you already think about it?"

Haulia tribe's members look at each other then shake their heads. Kam also has a hard expression. Even though they vaguely felt the uneasiness, it seems because they were in upheaval after upheaval that thought was thrown into the corner of their minds. Or it was possible that they didn't think about it at all.

"Well, it looks like you didn't think about it at all. No one told me you've think about it after all. You're weak, so you can only run and hide in front of malice and possibility of injury. To that kind of you, the place to retreat called Faea Belgaen was lost. In other words, when my protection is gone, you'll once more fall into predicament."

"""""""""… …"""""""""

Because that was right, everyone of Haulia tribe look down with dark expression. Meanwhile, they can Hear Hajime said.

“You didn’t have any way out. There is no protection nor place to hide. However, demonic beasts and humans will aimed at the weak you without mercy. If this going on there will be only path of annihilation… are you okay with that? Are you okay with weakness as the reason of your ruin? Is it okay for the lives that you luckily got back uselessly gone? What do you think?”

No one utter any words and gloomy atmosphere filled their vicinity. Until someone suddenly said.

“There no way I can accept that.”

Haulia tribe began to look up having touched by those words. Shia was already look resolute.

“That’s right. That can’t be accepted. Then, what should you do. The answer is easy. Just become strong. Just attack all the trouble that come and destroy it, you only need to acquire your rights with your own hands.”

“… … but, we are RabbitMan tribe. We didn’t have strong body such as Tigerman tribe and Bearman tribe neither special skill like Wingedman tribe and Earthman tribe… … we are totally, that…”

Because it was a common sense that RabbitMan tribe is weak, Hajime's words only give birth to negative feelings. Because they are weak, they can't fight. No matter how much they struggle to get strong as Hajime said, that's what they think.

Seeing this Haulia tribe Hajime laugh from his nose.

"Did you know I was called "incompetent" by my former companions?""

"Eh?"

""Incompetent" you hear, "incompetent". My status and skill was as ordinary as average person. The weakest among my companions. Nothing more than a burden in combat. Therefore, I was called "incompetent" by my former companions. Indeed, that was the truth."

All of Haulia tribe members were surprised by Hajime's confession. They can't believe that Hajime who was able to easily defeat Raisen Grand Canyon's brutal demonic beasts and Elder of Bearman tribe who excel in combat was someone "incompetent" and "weakest".

"However, I who was fallen into the bottom of the Abyss acted to become strong. I didn't think if something was possible or impossible to do. If I didn't do anything then I'd die, that's why I fought with all my might in that crisis. … … when I noticed I was already became this."

All of it was talked indifferently, however, all of Haulia tribe members can feel chill running through their whole body because of the sublime content. With status the same as average person means his specs is even lower than RabbitMan tribe. In that situation, he was able to defeat monsters that even stronger than demonic beasts in Raisen Grand Canyon that they can't even match again. His abilities and the fact that he survived even though he was the weakest after challenging those monsters make the Haulia tribe tremble in fear imagining those bizarre situations. If it was them they'll be crushed in despair and accept death in resignation. Just like how the accept the decision from the Elders Conference.

"Your situation now is similar to mine. Now promised to yourself, let's break the despair into pieces. I don't care even if you think it was impossible for you. You'll only be annihilated next time. After all, I won't help you after the promise is accomplished. It's okay to spend the little time remained in your life to lick each other wound just like losers."

Then, what will you do? is what Hajime asked with his eyes. There is no immediate answer from Haulia tribe members. Well, it can be said there is no other answers. They understood there is no other road to survive except to become strong. It's not like Hajime protect their family out of justice. Therefore, he will surely abandon them after their promise is fulfilled. However, even if they understand that, their nature is peaceful and gentle, the RabbitMan tribe's gentleness is stronger than anyone else, that's why for them Hajime's proposal is the same as stepping into an unknown territory. It was difficult for them to change their way of life unless they fall into the exact situation just like Hajime.

Haulia tribe fall into silent and look at each other. However, Shia who since a while ago floated a resolute expression look at them

with a skeptical gaze then she stand up.

“I’ll do it. Please teach me how to fight! I don’t want to stay weak anymore!”

Her shout echoes all over the Sea of Trees. A declaration to say there is no need to think more than this. Shia hates fighting. It was scary and painful, above all it was sad to hurt and to be hurt. However, it was the truth that she was the cause in driving her tribe into current predicament, so she absolutely won’t let her tribe perish. For that certain purpose, Shia wanted to become stronger even if it was against the nature of RabbitMan tribe.

Shia with unyielding determination in her eyes look straight at Hajime. Kam and his tribe who are dumbfounded by that, gradually change their expression into resolute one, one by one they stand up. In the end, not just the male, female and children of Haulia tribe all stood up and Kam who represent them move a step forward.

“Hajime-dono… … please teach us.”

His words was few. However, there is a will inside of it. The will to fight against injustice that’ll come to attack them.

“Okay. Are you prepared? How much stronger you become will be up to your determination. I am only here to give a hand to it. Also, I won’t be gentle to those who decided to drop out on the way. We only have ten days in addition… … be accustomed to dying. What await you were only life or death after all.”

Having heard Hajime's word, all of Haulia tribe members nodded with determination.

* * *

Before he start to train Haulia tribe, Hajime took out equipments that will be used to train from

"treasure box" and hand it to them. It was the single-edged knife that similar to a type of Japanese sword called kodachi that he passed to them before. Hajime made those blade with precision that even the sharpness is excellent because he practiced the method to manufacture the ultra thin blade. It was strong against impact because it made of Taur ore. It takes pride in its durability despite its thinness.

After he gave them those weapons, he taught them basic movements. Of course Hajime didn't have any knowledge in martial arts. But it was not something he got from manga or game. The things he taught was only "logical movements" that he gain and polish by fighting the demonic beasts in the Abyss. While doing so, he pile up real combat experience against types of demonic beasts. Haulia tribe strong points was their search ability and stealth ability. In conclusion, he think it's better for their group strategies that specialize in co-operation and surprise attacks.

By the way, Shia is exclusively trained by Yue about magic. That was because she can use magic even though she is a demi-human, Shia also able to use direct magic manipulation so she should be able to use magic without chant or magic circle as long as she has

the knowledge for it. Occasionally, Shia's scream can be heard from the other side of fog but it seems the training is going well.

However, something happen on the second day of training. Hajime looks irritated with veins appear on his head while supervising Haulia tribe's training. Certainly, Haulia tribe members who go against their nature were taking the training seriously. Even they somewhat manage to defeat demonic beasts without receiving much wounds.

However…

Gusagh(Thunk)!

One of the demonic beasts were dead pierced by Hajime's specialized kodachi.

"Aah, please forgive the sinful me~"

The one that said that while clinging to the demonic beast was a man of Haulia tribe. It's as if he is killing his best friend who he know for a long time.

Bushu(Foosh)!

Another demonic beast was defeated with a slash.

“I am sorry! I am sorry! Even so I must do it~”

A kodachi which gripped by both hand cut off the neck, while the woman who did it tremble. It’s like the result of a mad love, a woman who killed her loved one.

Bakikh!

To the dying demonic beast, it used the last of its power to attack. Kam who who blown off by the body blow was muttering in self-ridicule while falling.

“Huh, is this the punishment for me who brandish the sword… … it was the natural result after all…”

Having heard those words, the surrounding Haulia tribe were starting to tear up, then they shout to Kam in bitter expression.

“Chief! Please don’t say that! The sinful ones are all of us!”

“That’s right! Even if the time of judgment will come, but that’s not now! Please stand up! Chief!”

“We don’t have any road to return any more. That’s why Chief, let’s advance together until death.”

“Y-you guys… … that’s right. I can’t fall down in place like this. For the sake of his death (small demonic beast which look like a mouse), we will advance through the death!”

“”””””””””””Chief!”””””””””””

Good atmosphere surround Kam and his tribe. Hajime who can’t endure it anymore cut in.

“Aghhh—! It noisy, stupid! Why the heck are you exaggerating every time you kill one demonic beast! What for? Seriously what was that for? That cheap play! What was that dramatic feeling? Just kill it in silent! Just kill it instantly! Don’t call demonic beast “he”! That’s gross!”

That’s, even though he knew that Haulia tribe members are working hard, but because of their nature, every time they kill a demonic beast they make an unknown drama. This is the second day, having seen those spectacles for many times, Hajime already pointed this out many times, slowly, he run out of patience.

To Hajime who was angered, probably because he tried to contain his voice his body twitch and shake after “Even if you say that…” or “Even if they are demonic beasts, they are pitiful…” heard that mutter from the Haulia tribe members.

In addition a lot of vein appeared on his head.

One boy from Haulia tribe can't stand it anymore then tried to approach and calm Hajime. This boy was the one who Hajime helped by the hair-breadth from the Hyveria in Raisen Grand Canyon, seems to especially attached to him.

However, while the boy who advance while trying to say something to Hajime, suddenly, he jumped back.

Hajime who was dumbfounded by it asked the boy.

"? What happen?"

The boy answered Hajime while quietly crawling using both his hands.

"Ah, yes. I almost step on Flower-san… thank goodness. If I didn't noticed it, it'd be crushed. Because it was so beautiful, it'll be too pitiful to step on it."

Hajime's cheeks were convulsing.

"F-flower-san?"

"Un! Hajime-niichan! I really like Flower-san! Because there are lot of Flower-san around here, it was terrible if we crushed it while

training~”

Rabbit-eared boy smiled with a bright smile. The surrounding Haulia tribe members also look at this boy with smile.

Hajime slowly made his face look down. Hajime’s gray hair fall down and concealed his expression. Then, suddenly he answer with whisper-like voice.

“… … sometimes, while moving you jumped in strange timing… Is it because of that Flower-san?”

As Hajime said, during the training, Haulia tribe sometime change their pace according to strange timing, that kind of movement. Although it was in his mind, because it connected with their next action, it looked like they tried to find easier position for them to kill in his eyes.

“No no, that can’t be. There is no such a thing.”

“Haha, that’s right, right?”

Hajime start to loosen his said having heard what Kam said with a wry smile. However…

“Yes, not only just flowers, we also take notice of insects. When we have to move suddenly in hurry, we manage to avoid them

somehow.”

Having heard Kam’s words, Hajime expression start to fall. Hajime began to sway as if he was a ghost, while Haulia tribe members thinking something bad was said looked at each other in uneasiness. Hajime slowly approach the boy, then he suddenly reveal a smile while the boy also keep his smile.

And then Hajime… … with a smile step and crushed the flower. Politely, after step on it, he grind it with his foot.

The boy who saw it was dumbfounded. Finally Hajime remove his foot, what left is the remains of “Flower-san” that lay tragically after such cruelty.

“F-flower-sa～n!”

The boy’s sorrowful voice echoes inside the Sea of Trees. “What are you doing!” is what the Haulia tribe members’ surprised expression tell while looking at Hajime, then Hajime turn to look at them with a smile along with veins on his head.

“Aah, I finally understand. I finally fi～nally understand. I was too soft. It was my responsibility. It was my mistake to have hope for your tribe. Haha, I can’t believe even in life and death situation you still pay attention to “Flower-san” and “Insects”… … combat skills or real combat experiences is not your main problem. I should have noticed it faster. I am angry at my inexperience… … FUFUFU(HUHUHU)”

“Ha-Hajime-dono?”

After Hajime began to ominously laugh, Kam timidly asked him. And his answer is…

DOPANn!

Gunshot from Donner. Kam was blown off to the back face-up, after flailing a little in the air he fall into the ground. Next, the non-lethal rubber bullet that used to attack, dropped to the ground from Kam’s forehead.

In their vicinity wind blows “fooosh”, while silence rule the place. Hajime then approach Kam who was fainted with his eyes turned white, this time he aimed then shot the rubber bullet at Kam’s belly.

“Hauu!”

Kam who wake up with a scream along some fit of cough looked at Hajime with tearful eyes. Despite the surreal spectacle of seeing teary eyed bearded rabbit-eared old man sitting in woman-like, Hajime declared.

“You dirty “piip”. From this moment, you “piip” must kill those demonic beasts as if you’re going to die! In the future, don’t even

notice the flowers or insects! Or else I am going to “piip” you up! If you understand, hunt those demonic beasts now! This “piip”!”

Haulia tribe was stiffen by Hajime’s vulgar speech. And to them, Hajime fired without mercy.

DOPANn! DOPANn! DOPANn! DOPANn! DOPANn! DOPANn! DOPANn! DOPANn! DOPANn! DOPANn! DOPANn! DOPANn! DOPANn!

Haulia tribe scattered into the Sea of Trees just like spider’s childrens while screaming. The boy desperately cling to Hajime while trembling.

“Hajime-niichan! What happened!? Why did you do this!?”

Hajime glared at the boy who stare at him with sparkling eyes, then look at the surrounding and confirmed flowers were blooming here and there. Until finally, he silently fire again.

One after another the flowers were scattered. The boy is screaming.

“Why~, just why~, please stop Hajime-niichan!”

“Shut up, shitty brat. Did you know? Everytime you talk uselessly I will dispersed the surrounding flowers. If you pay attention to the flowers, it’ll be dispersed. Even if you not doing anything, I’ll

dispersed it. If you don't want that, go kill a lot of demonic beasts!"

Having said so, Hajime start to shot the flowers again. The boy's cried then disappeared into the Sea of Trees.

After that, inside the Sea of Trees "piip" can continue be heard in Haulia members' scream and cry(roar).

It was the training method to alter the character of RabbitMan tribe who was not good in combat by nature. Even combat skills and spirit can be altered using this method, it can be said similar to He***man method from earth…

Arifureta: Volume 4 Chapter 6

Shia, Grand Battle of One's Lifetime

ZUGANn! DOGHA! BAKI BAKI BAKI! DOGUSHA!

Tremendous sounds of destruction could be heard inside the Sea of Trees. Some trees could be witnessed, broken in two. There were craters scattered here and there that can be seen on the surface as if meteors fell into it. Furthermore some trees are burning while some are frozen.

The cause of such devastation against nature are two girls. Even now, the destruction is still ongoing.

"Deeyaaaa(Take this)!!"

A tree with a diameter of one meter was shot out along with the ear-splitting yell. It broke in the middle and flew into the target with great speed. With definite mass and speed. A brutal power of destruction was given to the rather mundane tree, carrying devastation across its wake.

"… … "Scarlet Spear""

It was a spear of flame that burns its target and everything in front

of it into ash. Even objects with huge mass will be burned if touched by it. It countered the log that moves like a cannonball and turned it into ashes fluttering in the air.

“Not yet!”

The shockwave created by the collision between the thrown “Scarlet Spear” and log, dispersed the fog, and on the other side of the fog, a running silhouette could be seen. Immediately, a log falls from the sky like a meteor and pierces the ground with a sound of thunder. Backstepping, its target escapes from the range of the shock wave then once again the spear of flame was released.

However, the silhouette rushed out from the fog in high speed and then a strong flying kick attacked the log that pierced the ground. It’s unknown where the power came from but the log that received the kick was explosively smashed, and from it came splinters that shot at the target.

“kh! “Fire Castle””

Suddenly a wall of flame that can be called a rampart came out to block the improvised shots that come flying, not even one shot was able to reach its target.

However…

“Got youu!”

“Kh!”

At that time the silhouette already moved behind her. After shooting the improvised shots that acted as a splendid distraction, she once again slips into the fog. Her hand grasped the hammer that could be called ultraweight class, immediately, a powerful wind descended.

“”Wind Wall””

A fierce impact from the Sledge Hammer struck the ground and crushed it. From the impact, stones were shot out and scattered in every direction. However, her target was able to block that terrific attack, and scattered it using the blowing wind coming from the wind barrier, because it immediately retreated into the safe area. In addition, after activating this skill, the target fired another magic without mercy at the other party that is a goner, because of post-skill rigidity.

“”Frozen Coffin””

“Fue! W-wa-!”

When she noticed her target’s magic, she desperately cried out for it to stop, but there is no need to hear that, because the law of no-talking-is-necessary was in place. The attacker tried to get away from her location but the ice magic instantly started to freeze her feet… … and resulted in her whole body turning into a chunk of

ice, except the head.

“Co-cold~, please hurry release it~, Yue-sa~n”

“… … My victory”

That’s right, the two who kept fighting without any discussion were Yue and Shia. Today was the start of their tenth day’s training, a mock combat as the final test. The rule was that it’ll be Shia’s victory if she was able to damage Yue even a little. The result…

“Uu~, that is~, eh, that! Yue-san’s cheek! There is a scratch! A scratch! My attack hit! Ahaha~, I did it! It’s my win!”

Certainly, there is a small scratch on Yue’s cheek. Probably it came from a piece of rocky debris that broke through Yue’s defense. Even though it was a really small scratch, a wound is a wound. It was Shia’s victory. After pointing that out, Shia’s face looked overjoyed by it. She revealed a big smile, although her body was cold and her nose was running. Her rabbit ears twitched happily. No wonder, there is an important promise she made with Yue in this training graduation’s battle after all.

Also, for Yue, that promise is not something amusing. Therefore,

“… … there is no wound”

It was a good thing that the wound disappeared immediately because of “Auto Regen”. She sulkily turn her head with a hmpf.

“W-wa-!? It’s unfair! Certainly the scratch… … no, even though there is nothing now! There certainly was! It’s cruel to cheat! Now that I said it, please remove the magic already~. It’s been cold since a while ago… … huh, somehow I’m becoming sleepy…”

From the cold and runny nose, Shia begins to doze off. You’ll die if you sleep! That’s her current situation. Yue, who was peeking at that appearance let out a deep sigh while thinking it must not be continued in her heart, removed her magic.

“Pikchi-! Pikchi! Auu, it’s co~ld. I almost became a rabbit that can’t return (to life)”

After a lovely sneeze, she covers her nose with a nearby leaf. Shia then looked at Yue with seriousness in her eyes. Yue made an unpleasant expression because of her gaze. Her expressionlessness collapsed because of that unpleasant expression.

“Yue-san. I’ve won.”

“… … … … … … Nn.”

“It is a promise, right?”

“… … … … … … … … Nn.”

“If, I can win at least once in the ten days… … I’ll be taken along on Hajime-san and Yue-san’s travels, right?”

“… … … … … … … … … … Nn.”

“At the very least, you’ll help to convince Hajime-san, right?”

“… … … … … … … … … … Today’s breakfast, what is it?”

“Waiiit! What’s with sudden change of topic! Moreover, it was light! Yue-san, aren’t you okay as long as there is Hajime-san’s blood! What’s with you asking about breakfast! Please be my ally already! If I have Yue-san as an ally, it’s already 90% OK”

Shia makes gya- gya- noises, Yue looked at that expression that came from the bottom of her heart.

As Shia said, Yue had promised her. That is, Yue said to Shia, only if she was able to damage her in the mock combat even with a small injury within ten days. If she did it, Yue must acknowledge and allow Shia to travel along with her and Hajime. Also, Yue must help Shia persuade Hajime when she asks him.

Shia seriously wanted to come along with Hajime and Yue. Half of it because she didn't want to become a burden to her family, while the other half simply because she wanted to be together with Hajime and Yue, and to get along with the two.

However, her wish was refused coldly. Even now that can be seen from Hajime and Yue's attitude. At that time, what Shia thought of was the promise from before.

In Shia's eyes, Hajime somehow pampered Yue by fulfilling her expectations. Above all, Shia is a woman. She understood Yue's feelings toward Hajime. Naturally it was because she also has the same feelings. So, the reverse is also true. Yue also understood Shia's feelings. That's why, first of all it was necessary to make Yue acknowledge Shia Haulia's existence.

It's not like Shia wanted to take Hajime from Yue. She didn't think about that at all. What she wanted from Hajime was to acknowledge her existence just like Yue, even a little. That was probably because of the world's influence that made them the "same". In other words, she only wanted to be "friends" with them. So that there'll be someone she love and a friend who also love that person by her side. That's the kind of future that Shia dreamt of.

On the other hand, about why Yue exchanged that promise to Shia, even though there were no merits in it for Yue. 20% of it was because she felt sympathy to her. When she heard Shia's story for the first time inside the Raisen Grand Canyon, even though she developed complex feelings because her circumstances were comparatively better than her own, somewhere in her heart she can't deny the feeling that they are the "same" that sprung up. Because she thinks of her as a comrade even if a little, she "pampered" Shia.

The other 80% was… … woman's obstinacy. Yue was able to grasp Shia's promise. That is,

"Please see it for yourself if I'll just be a burden. Even if it's impossible, please notice that I'm able to be beside Hajime".

It was a challenge to fight over the man she loves. She didn't think such a woman could exist near her. However, when she thought Shia who was the "same" as her as an opponent, along with Shia's enthusiastic appearance and terrific concentration, in the depths of her heart she thought it was impossible to keep silent.

As a result, the match of promise was won by Shia.

"… … haa. I understand. I'll defend the promise…"

"Really!? As expected, the~re is no need to stop~! Please defend it well!"

"… … … … … … … …Nn"

"Somehow, I think there was a strange pause… Will you really take care of it?"

"… … persistent"

Reluctantly, tru~ly with reluctant feelings, Yue admitted Shia's victory. Shia was a little uneasy about Yue's answer but left it behind and continued with expressions of relief and joy, because she knew that Yue was the same as Hajime in the fact that she won't abandon her promises.

Slowly, the training of Haulia tribe by Hajime came to an end. The gloomy Yue and cheerful Shia were returning to Hajime and the others.

* * *

When Yue and Shia arrived at the place Hajime was at, Hajime had his eyes closed, and arms crossed while leaning on the nearby tree.

Maybe because he noticed the two's presence, Hajime slowly opened his eyes and turned to them. While dubiously looking at the two with completely opposite moods, he raised one hand and called out to them.

"Yo, both of you. Did the match end?"

Hajime had heard there was a bet between the two for the match. Hajime was the one who prepared Shia's ultraweight Sledgehammer. The Shia who, with an eager expression wanted to defeat Yue, and asked him for a new weapon still fresh in his memory, because Yue herself didn't object to it. Although the contents of the bet weren't known and they wouldn't tell him

anyway, also because it wouldn't be a disadvantage for Yue, he made it.

Actually, Hajime thought, if Yue and Shia fought 8-9 out of 10 cases would end up with Yue's victory. He already understood Yue's ability in the Abyss. No matter if Shia was able to directly use magic, she who was immersed in peace until now is different from them.

However, from their expressions, Hajime was internally surprised that his expectations were overthrown. Shia cheerfully talked to Hajime.

"Hajime-san! Hajime-san! Please hear me out! I, was finally able to win against Yue! It's a big victory! Well~, I want to show it to Hajime-san~, my magnificent fight! The time when Yue-san admits def-hebu!?"

Shia tried to explain how their match settled with gestures. But because she got too into it, Yue's jumping slap came and with a "dosha" she was blown away, and crashed into the ground while spinning. It was so strong that she could only twitch without any signs of getting up.

Yue turned around with hmpf in a bad mood, then Hajime asked her in a wry smile.

"Well? What happened?"

Rather than the match's result, Hajime was asking about the content. Honestly, the fact that Yue was defeated is not something he can believe easily. No matter who looked at Yue and Shia, without knowing what had happened, would only think that it was a lie.

Yue who exude the aura that she doesn't want to talk about it didn't want to hide it, reluctantly she answered Hajime's question.

"… … her magic aptitude is steady like Hajime"

"That's good, or else it'll be waste of a treasure… … then? That's not all, right? To be pestered by a Sledgehammer of that level…"

"… … nn, she specializes in body strengthening. Honestly, it was at level of a monster"

"… … hee. Is that compared to us?"

Hajime narrowed his eyes to Yue's evaluation. Honestly, the high evaluation was more than he imagined. Strangely, her expressionlessness was destroyed changing into bitterness while talking about it, these were the things he noticed. Yue could be seen thinking of how to answer Hajime's question, and then she replied while looking into his eyes.

"… … compared to normal Hajime… … around 60%"

“Seriously… … is that the maximum?”

“Nn… … but, there are rooms for improvement, probably”

“Ooo. That’s certainly at the level of a monster”

Hajime was secretly surprised at having heard Yue talk about Shia’s monster-like power, then he looked at Shia without saying anything. If it’s said around 60% of Hajime without any strengthening, Shia’s strengthened status should be around 6000. It was around twice as much as a truly strengthened hero. Truly a power worthy of being considered “monster level”. It can be said she was capable of reaching Yue. It really was something unimaginable from her usual sobbing and whimpering appearance.

Shia noticed Hajime’s half-astonished half-amazed gaze. She cheerfully stood up, then walked up to Hajime with a serious expression while desperately controlling her hurried mind. Straightening her posture, her gray hair with a blue hue was fluttering and her rabbit ear stood up straight. From now on she’ll express her once in a lifetime request. Well… … it can also be called a confession. Her body trembled in nervousness, even though her expression stiffened, there is an unyielding spirit in her eyes, step by step, she advanced. Finally, she firmly matched her gaze with Hajime’s, then spoke her wish.

“Hajime-san. Please take me along on your travels. Please!”

“I refuse”

“An immediate answer!?”

Shia who didn’t think she’d be refused because of the mood right now, opened her eyes wide with a look of astonishment. “What is she saying all of a sudden?” was the thing that could be seen from Hajime’s eyes while he watched Shia as if watching a shameless person.

Shia was indignant. It’s okay to struggle some more! Something like that.

“Ho-how cruel, Hajime-san. Even though I was seriously asking that, to easily…”

“Well, though I don’t want to know even if you said it. First of all, what about Kam and the others? Don’t tell me, you aren’t trying to take them along, right?”

“Th-that’s wrong! It was my own story just now! I already talked before to father and the others. Even though it’s not like they think I was a burden… … that’s… …”

“That’s? What is it?”

Somehow Shia started to become bashful. While upwardly peeking

at Hajime and playing around with the tip of her fingers. A sly, cunning gesture. Hajime was suspiciously looking at Shia.

At their side, Yue looked irritated while staring at Shia.

“That’s… … I, I just wanted to follow what I thought of…”

“Haa? What are you trying to follow? If it’s now, you won’t be burden to your tribe, right? If you have that power then generally, there shouldn’t be anyone you can’t beat”

“… …”

Shia who bashfully tried to answer made Hajime reach his limit of patience, he then pulled out Donner. It wasn’t known whether she noticed that but Shia yelled “Woman’s courage!” in her mind then voiced out her desire.

“I want to stay beside Hajime-san! I love you!”

“… … Ha?”

I’ve said it, now I only need to bite it! Was what Shia thought while panicking, in front of her, Hajime looked dumbfounded as if he was a pigeon that ate a toy bullet. Exactly the appearance of someone who didn’t understand what happened. However, after a while, as if the meaning finally transmitted into his brain, he

instinctively blurted out a remark (or tsukkomi).

“Nonono, isn’t that weird? Where the hell did I raise the flag? Even though I can’t say for myself, I thought I treated you harshly… … don’t tell me, did you get off from that?”

Shia never thought he would think of her like that and started to back away one step with regret from Hajime. Then Shia fiercely protested.

“Who’s a pervert! I don’t have that kind of hobby! Rather, if you noticed that I was treated harshly, why don’t you be a little nicer…”

“Well, there is no need for me to be nicer to you… … first of all, are you seriously in love with me? Aren’t you just tempted by the circumstances?”

The reason for Hajime not believing Shia’s goodwill is because he thought it was just a suspension bridge effect. It wasn’t a surprise because everyone could see Hajime’s attitude toward Shia was harsh in every aspect. However, Shia who had her feelings doubted was very ill-humored.

“It was not related to the circumstance at all. No matter how many times you saved me from predicament, my constitution won’t change… … even though I was glad at that time when you protected your promise in front of the Elders… … that may have affected me, but this feeling’s already born so how can I do anything about this. Even I sometimes think about it. Something

like “why it was this person”. Hajime-san even now never calls me by my name, somehow it suddenly hit me and it hurts, just like a demon, answering only what’s needed, always throwing himself into a crowd of demonic beasts, has no mercy, just like a demon, is never nice to me, only favoring Yue-san, just like a demon… … huh? Really, why am I in with love you? Huh～?”

While speaking, Shia began to doubt her own feelings. Shia inclines her neck and Hajime has veins popping out of his head, while barely being able to resist pulling out Donner unintentionally by mistake, while hearing her answer.

“A-anyway. I can’t let you come along no matter what you feel”

“That’s! That was a joke just now? I truly love you so please take me along!”

“You know, your feelings are… … well, even if they are real, don’t you understand that I already have Yue? Rather, to be able to say that confession in front of her… … even I thought about it a while ago, your number one weapon was your body strengthening, but that’s not it, right? I think it was your heart that’s completely made of Azanthium”

“Who’s the one with the heart made from the ore with the greatest hardness! Uu～, it’s become like this as expected… … ee, I understand. Everything about Hajime-san. It was as tricky as I thought”

Suddenly, Shia “fufufu” laughed suspiciously while turning toward

Hajime.

“Because I thought this might happen! I’ve gained an ally while risking my life! Now, Yue-sensei! Please help me!”

“Ha? Yue?”

Hajime blinked his eyes having heard an unexpected name. Gotcha!, that’s the smug expression of Shia, then she glanced at Yue by their side.

Yue’s expression was so bitter as if she bit 100 insects at once, then genuinely unwillingly told Hajime.

“… … … … … … … … … … … … … … … Hajime, let’s take her along”

“Nonono, what’s with that interval. You obviously hate it… … don’t tell me it was the winning bet…”

“… … Regrettably”

Hajime roughly understood the circumstance from Yue who dropped her shoulders, he no longer felt anger but amazement. Surely, Shia was thinking, for Hajime to hear out her wish, her power truly isn’t enough. Once again, she remembered how Hajime took Yue’s words as a priority in decision making. Therefore, she

needed a method to make Yue her ally. It was not an exaggeration to call it “a life risking” method, because she understood it’d otherwise be impossible considering she somewhat knew how Yue feels. In these ten days, it can be said she was literally dying to find out Yue’s habits (in training/combat). In other words, that’s just how serious Shia thought about it.

Hajime was scratching his head. Even if he saw how Yue was reluctantly admitting her, there’s no reason for him to take Shia along. In the end, it was a matter of Hajime’s feelings.

Yue was shrugging her shoulder as if saying that it can’t be helped. It was because in these ten days she, more than anyone had watched how Shia worked hard and how she destroyed the trouble that imposed her, so Yue allowed her to be a travel companion. In the beginning, she never felt hatred toward Shia or her feelings toward Hajime.

On the other side, Shia who asked Yue for help with a triumphant expression started to feel unease but she steeled herself. It was because Shia already tried everything she could, so she could only wait for her fate to play out.

Hajime inhaled and exhaled deeply once and looked straight into Shia’s eyes, then he spun the words of confirmation one by one. Shia quietly regained her power when he heard his words.

“To go with us, don’t you already know the answer?”

“Didn’t you know? Isn’t the future not an absolute thing?”

Shia said that because she was able to catch a glimpse of the future. She believes that the future can be changed by actions and resolution.

“It’s a journey full of danger”

“I’m glad I am a monster. Thanks to that I can go with you.”

That was the derogatory term from the Elders. However, she takes pride in it now. After all, she learned that there are things she wouldn’t be capable of unless she was a monster.

“My wish is to get back to my hometown (original world). You’ll likely never meet your family again, you know?”

“I have talked about that. “Nevertheless”. Father and the others understand”

They are family that always protected her until now. There is no word that can express her gratitude. A family that’s always together no matter where they are, when she told them her feelings, they will surely smile without any need of words.

“My hometown isn’t somewhere you can easily live in”

“I’ll say it no matter what. “Nevertheless””

Shia has shown her feelings. It won’t stop with just that “word”. It can’t be stopped. That’s the kind of feeling this was.

“… …”

“Fufu, is that the end? Then, it’s my victory, right?”

“What victory…”

“It was my feelings that won. … … Hajime-san”

“… … What”

Once more, clearly. Shia Haulia’s wish.

“… … please take me with you”

Hajime and Shia looked at each other. Hajime looked into her azure eyes to confirm her intentions.

Then… …

“… … … … … … Haa~, do whatever you like. Curious one”

Maybe because he saw something in her eyes, before long Hajime gave out a sigh then told her he gave up.

Inside the Sea of Trees, one shout of joy and a sound of disgruntled noise echoed. Having seen that, Hajime could only give out a wry smile with a lot of implications that there’ll be a lot of trouble from now on.

Arifureta: Volume 4 Chapter 7

Haulia's Sudden Change

"Ehehe, uhehehe, kufufufu~"

Having been allowed to accompany them, Shia was happy. With both hands on her cheeks, a loose expression on her face, and that strange laughter she started letting out while twisting her body, it was a shameless appearance. So shameless that her previous seriousness, when confronting Hajime seemed like a lie.

"… … Gross"

Is what Yue muttered because she couldn't stand it anymore. Shia's excellent rabbit ears caught that mutter.

"… … Wa-, who is gross! Why would you call me gross? It's just that I was so happy that it can't be helped. After all, isn't this my first time seeing Hajime's dere side? Didn't you also see it? His previous expression. Suddenly my chest became 'kyun'(tightened)~. with this the time when he becomes hopelessly in love with me isn't that far off~"

Shia was elated and became more caught up in it. Having seen that Shia, Hajime and Yue muttered together in disgust.

“”… … Annoying rabbit””

“W-wa-!? What’s with that, calling me annoying rabbit! Please call me by my name already~, we are travel companions~. Don’t tell me, it’s not like you’re unwilling want to call me by name from the very beginning, right? Right?”

“”… …””

“Why did you become silent? Wait, please don’t look away~. Come on, it’s Shia, Shi-a. Repeat after me, Shi-a”

While Shia desperately tried to make them call her by name, Hajime and Yue only narrowed their eyes and started to discuss their future plans. Then Shia clung to them with teary eyes and said, “Don’t ignore me~, I don’t want to be left out~”. Even after becoming a travel companion, they treated her just as harshly as before.

While someone was making a racket (Shia), several Haulia tribe members appeared from the fog, they returned after clearing Hajime’s challenge; to subdue demonic beasts and return with proof in their hands. When you look closely, one of them was Kam.

Shia was smiling wide, this being the first time she’d seen her family in days. The last time she’d seen them was when she was explaining her feelings to them, before her training started. Even though it was only ten days, every day, it was deadly training. Extraordinary concentrated training at that. Because of that, for Shia, it felt like they hadn’t met each other for months.

Immediately, Shia started talking to her father, Kam. There was a lot to tell. However, right before she said anything, Shia swallowed her words. She noticed a strange atmosphere surrounding Kam and the others.

Kam who saw Shia only revealed a slight smile, immediately his gaze returned to Hajime. And…

“Boss. About the demonic beasts, have we hunted them on time?”

“Bo-boss? Fa-father? Somehow your tone… … rather, your atmosphere was…”

Because of her father’s speech and behaviour, Shia’s puzzled voice could be heard. However, she was ignored while , rustling, Kam and the others pulled out claws of the demonic beasts that could be considered high ranked in the Sea of Trees.

“… … I thought I said one was enough…”

The training graduation challenge by Hajime was to hunt a high ranking demonic beast for each team. However, there were enough parts her for ten demonic beasts. Against Hajime’s question, Kam and the others answered with fearless smiles.

“Yes, that’s what you’ve ordered, right? While we were doing that,

its companions came out… … because they impudently turned their killing intent towards us, we just politely welcomed it. Right? Everyone?”

“That’s right, Boss. Those guys were too impudent for demonic beasts”

“We completely defeated them. Without missing even one, right?”

“Even though they were noisy… … their barking voices were good, fufu”

“Well it was good to serve as a warning…”

“Well, we already chopped them to pieces, wasn’t that enough?”

It was a parade of disturbing remarks. All of them, there was no trace of their original peaceful and gentle RabbitMan tribe demeanor. They reported the results of their dangerous combat to Hajime with fearless smiles and glaring eyes.

Stunned, the Shia watching this could only utter a single word,

“… … Who?”

* * *

“Wh-what happened!? Hajime-san! What on earth happened to father and the others!?”

“C-calm down! N-nothing happened… … it was the result of training…”

“Nono, what happened to make them like this!? Aren’t they completely different people?! Wait, please don’t look away! Look at me!”

“… … it’s not like there are any big differences, right?”

“Are your eyes knotholes (ornaments)! Please look at them. A while ago they were charmed just by staring at their knives! Ah, just now, someone called their knife Julia! Normally, isn’t that scary?”

Shia’s angry voice filled with frustration echoed in the Sea of Trees. What on earth had happened? That was what Kam and the others thought while exchanging glances between Hajime and Shia, with confused expressions. They exchanged glances for a while until the other members of the Haulia tribe came back, all of them were… … that is to say… … they look wild. Not only the adult males but also the females, children and even the elderly.

Shia pointed at her family that completely changed, while

approaching Hajime with tremendous momentum to urge him for an explanation. Hajime awkwardly averted his gaze while being interrogated by Shia.

Maybe she judged she wouldn't be able to make any progress, so Shia changed her target to Kam and the others.

"Father! Everyone! What on earth has happened!? It's as if you're different people!? From before, you've only been saying frightening things… … please come back to your senses!"

Kam who was clung onto by Shia, started to loosen his glaring expression and reverted to his gentle expression. That made Shia a little relieved.

However…

"What are you saying, Shia? We are sane/okay. It's just that we have awoken to the truth of this world. It's all thanks to Boss"

"T-the truth? What was that?"

Having a bad feeling about it, Shia asked while her cheeks twitched, and Kam smiled while confidently declaring.

"90% of this world's problems can be solved with violence"

“It was a different person after all?! My gentle father was already dead~, uwaa~n”

Because of the shock, Shia ran and disappeared into the Sea of Trees while crying. However, before she got into the fog, a small shadow immediately appeared before her and she fell on her butt while “hauu” letting out a miserable voice.

That small shadow was able to keep its balance without falling, then it stretched out its hand towards Shia.

“Th-thank you very much”

“Well, think nothing of it, Shia big sis(anego). It was the natural thing for a man”

“B-big sis (A-anego)?”

What appeared from the fog was a boy from the Haulia tribe that could still be called a child. On his shoulder was a big crossbow while two knives and a slingshot-like weapon were attached to his waist. It was a boy who often displays a nihilistic smile. Shia who was never called “anego” until now looked up, in front of her was the boy that usually called her “Shia-oneechan” so she was puzzled by it.

With Shia staring at him with a skeptical gaze, the boy pit-pat walked up in front of Hajime then he gloriously saluted him.

“Boss! I am sorry to come back empty-handed! There is something that I must report! Permission to speak!”

“O-ou? What is it?”

At boy’s veteran soldier-like atmosphere, even though it’s too late, Hajime thought Shia was right, and that it was a little too much. And then he stuttered a little. The boy continued his report without a care.

“Affirmative! Problem found while pursuing demonic beasts, I discovered a group of fully-armed Bearman tribe. The place was on the route to the Great Tree. Perhaps they thought to ambush us!”

“A~, they’ve come as expected. Although I thought they’d come immediately… … I see, they wanted to crush us in front of our goal huh. It was a somewhat good demeanor. … … then?”

“Affirmative! If it’s okay, how about leaving those guys to us, Haulia!”

“We~ll. How about it, Kam? Do you have anything to say?”

Having heard that, Kam was shaken, and since it was something he

wished for he began to grin with a fearless smile then nodded.

“By all means, leave it to us. Our power, we wanted to know… … how far our power has come, compared to them. Wha~t, it’s not like we will show anything disgraceful.”

Having heard their chief’s words, the surrounding Haulia tribe, all of them, showed belligerent expressions. The number of people who called their weapons by name with increasing admiration could be felt. Shia’s expression was dyed with despair.

“… … Can you do it?”

“Affirmative!”

The one who cheerfully answered Hajime’s last confirmation was the boy. Hajime once again closed his eyes then breathed deeply and ‘Ka’ opened his eyes wide.

“Hear me! Everyone from Haulia tribe! Every one of you brave and resolute warriors! Today, you’re graduated from being shitty maggots! You are no longer the worthless existence to be weeded out! Crush unjustness with power, hold down those hostilities with wisdom! O strongest warriors! Teach those bears “bleep” for inciting our resentment by bringing us to our current situation! Those guys are nothing but redundant stepping stones! They are only “bleep”! Build mountains with their corpses, and rivers with their blood, as proof! The proof of your rebirth! The proof to everyone in the Sea of Trees, to show that the Haulia tribe is reborn!”

“”””””””””””””” Sir, yes, Sir!!”””””””””””””””

“Answer me! Everyone! The greatest and strongest warriors! What is it that you wish for!”

“”””””””””””””” Kill them!! Kill them! Kill them!!”””””””””””””””

“What is your specialty!”

“”””””””””””””” Kill!! Kill!! Kill!!”””””””””””””””

“If there are enemies what will you do!”

“”””””””””””””” Kill them all!! Kill them all!! Kill them all!!”””””””””””””””

“That’s right! Kill them all! You can do it! Take the right to live with your own hands!”

“”””””””””””””” Aye, aye, Sir!!”””””””””””””””

“That’s the spirit! Everyone of the Haulia tribe! I only have one order! Search & destroy! Go!!”

“”””””””””””””” YAHAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAA!!!!!”””””””””””””””

“Uwaa~n, all the members of my family are dead after all~”

Under Hajime’s command, the Haulia tribe members’ fierceness returned and they disappeared into the fog. The tribe which was once gentle, peaceful, and above all weak at fighting… … where have they gone? That was the only thing she could say. Having seen her family completely change once more, while collapsing Shia’s vain cry echoed in the Sea of Trees. As expected, because she couldn’t stand it anymore, Yue patted and stroked Shia’s head to comfort her.

When the boy beside Shia, who ‘hic”hic’ ‘sob”sob’ cried, tried to go, he was called to a stop by Shia.

“Pal-kun! Please wait! L-look, don’t you see a beautiful flower-san over here? Even if you don’t go… … how about you wait here with onee-chan? Okay? How about it?

Apparently, she seems to be trying to at least bring this little boy back to his former self. She pointed at the beautifully blossoming flowers while desperately trying to persuade him. The reason she used a flower was because this boy loved flowers so much that he even said “Flower-sa~n” before.

The flower boy named Pal who was called out to stop by Shia, only ‘yare yare daze’ shook his head and shrugged his shoulders while

sighing “Fuu～”. It looked like the overreactions used by the Europeans and Americans.

“Anego, please don’t open up my old wound. I’ve already gotten rid of my past. The weak mind that enjoyed the beauty of flowers is no more”

By the way, this boy called Pal is 11 years old this year.

“O-old wound? Get rid of your past? Wait, I don’t understand, but do you mean you don’t like flowers anymore?”

“Yes, I have thrown away those feelings along with my past”

“That, even though you loved them so much…”

“Fuh, it was just a mistake of youth”

I repeat, Pal-kun is 11 years old this year.

“More importantly, anego”

“W-what is it?”

Having seen the changes in the boy who had sometimes picked flowers and dearly called out “Shia-oneechan! Shia-oneechan!”, Shia’s consciousness started to escape reality. She was barely able to reply to Pal’s words. However, it became the signal for her to further her pursuit (of escapism).

“I’ve also thrown away my weak name along with the past. Now my name is Baltoferd. From now on please call me “Baltoferd of Certain Death””

“Who was that!? Where did that Baltoferd come from!? Rather, what’s with certain death!?”

“Oh, sorry. My comrades are waiting so it’s my time to go. Well then!”

“A, hey! What do you mean by “well then!”! Even now, our talk is still eh, fast! Wait! Please wait～”

Just like a woman that was left behind by her lover, Shia collapsed while her hand tried to reach the other side of the fog. No one answered her, this girl’s family, all of them fiercely went to the battlefield. Shia who was gakkuri drooped, once again hic hic cried. The family that this girl once knew was no more. It was truly a pitiful sight.

Shia’s appearance was seen by Yue who wore a subtle expression because she couldn’t say anything to her. Hajime who felt it was somewhat awkward let his gaze wander. Yue’s gaze turned to Hajime then bluntly muttered.

“… … as expected of Hajime, to be able to calmly accomplish something no one can”

“Well, like I said before where did you get that material…”

“… … to be able to use that dark magic, brainwash… … amazing”

“… … honestly, I think it was a little too much. Even though there’s neither reflection nor regret”

For a while, in the place left behind by the Haulia tribe, Shia’s crying voice and subtle atmosphere hung in the air.

Arifureta: Volume 4 Chapter 8

Hajime's Failure

Regin Banton was a strong man, rumored to be the next Chief of the Banton tribe; one of the Bearman tribes. He idolized one of the current Elders; Jin Banton, and became his right hand.

Not only Regin, it could be said Jin was popular in the Banton tribe as a whole, especially the younger ones. The reasons for that being Jin's character was broad minded, containing deep patriotism, and above all, his strength, which allowed him to be considered as one of the highest class among the demi-human race.

That's why, when the Bearman tribe heard the news, they thought it was a bad joke. They couldn't believe their beloved Elder had been incapacitated by a human. However, the merciless reality was proven. Jin, who was lying powerless in medical facility showed them the truth .

Regin was dumbfounded having seen Jin's current appearance. Next, his anger and hatred surfaced. While bearing these feelings inside his heart, he pressed to determine the circumstances from the Elders. As the result, Regin who had learned everything, disregarded the Elders and told the Bearman tribe everything. And thus they embarked for revenge.

Because of the persuasion from the Elders and other tribes, not all of the Bearman tribe followed him, only the youngsters from

Banton tribe who admired Jin had left to defeat that hated human. They numbered around 50 people. Regin and the others who knew their enemy's objective thought it best to attack when their enemy was in front of the Great Tree as revenge. They thought, "To perish right before the goal is the best (revenge)".

After all, their enemies only consists of humans and the RabbitMan tribe. Even though Jin was defeated, they thought it was because something cowardly, like a surprise attack. They thought there was nothing to fear of humans who would go mad without a sense of direction deep inside the Sea of Trees' fog, even more so for the weak RabbitMan tribe. Regin was an outstanding person. Normally, he wouldn't interpret the situation like that. However, currently his eyes were clouded by anger.

However, no matter what, even if his eyes were clouded…

"This is wrong!?"

Regin screamed in disbelief. The reason; before his very eyes an impossible spectacle was displayed. The RabbitMan tribe, which was placed at the bottom among other demi-humans, was cornering the Bearman tribe, which was known as one of the strongest in combat.

"Come on come on come on! Show your fighting spirit! Or else, I will cut you!"

"AHAHAHAHAHA, scream like the pig you are!"

“It’s time to clean this filth! HYAHAHAHAHA HA!”

While the Haulia tribe swung countless fatal, murderous attacks, their loud laughter resounded. There was no appearance of the RabbitMan tribe which was gentle, peaceful, and above all, weak in combat. Screams came from the Bearman tribe that desperately try to fight back.

“Shit! The heck is this! Just who the hell are you!!”

“They must not be the RabbitMan tribe!”

“Uwaaaa! Stay away! Stay awaaaay!”

They were ambushed by the enemies they wanted to ambush, the RabbitMan tribe that laid in ambush showed unbelievable power, even among other demi-human races. Arrows and stones that fly accurately out of nowhere, added to their excellent teamwork. The glee with which they swung their blades, wearing lunatic expressions, and laughing loudly all the while! All of it gave birth to violent commotion. In that situation, their specs even exceed the Bearman tribe.

Actually, the RabbitMan tribe wouldn’t be able to compete in a one on one fight against the Bearman tribe. However, in these past ten days, the Haulia tribe was able to make up the difference, thanks to the hell-like training.

Originally, the RabbitMan tribe's specs were lower than the other demi-human races. However, to survive and avoid battle, they had polished their stealth ability and danger perception. After all, they could only survive that way.

As a result, they were able to promptly perceive their enemies' presences to the point they could ambush their enemies. It could be said that they are a race with abilities suited for assassination. However, their innate nature had crushed these advantages.

It could be said, Hajime's training woke their combat instincts. He single-handedly abused and cornered them by letting them swing weapons, cut their enemies, and letting them experience how to evade, without rest. By remembering the speech from senior sergeant Hart**n, as a result of ten days of severe training, their minds completely became combat oriented. Although he did feel like it was too much…

They, who had acquired the aggressiveness to attack without any hesitation, demonstrated promising combat prowess. Because they thought of the whole tribe as members of one family, their level of teamwork was high from the get go. With their skillful adjustment of presence, it demonstrated tremendous effect, along with their teamwork.

In addition, one of the reasons for the Haulia tribe's high combat prowess was the weapons made by Hajime, which increased their incompetent attack power.

Each of them wielded two Kodachis, produced with a precise and

practiced process, such that their ultra-thin blades were able to split a grass just by touching it. They were made of Taur ore, so they were durable. The Haulia tribe also carried disposable throwing knives.

There were also the powerful Slingshots and Crossbows that were made using string with great elasticity gathered from spider-like demonic beasts in the Abyss. They were made for the children of the Haulia tribe, since close range battles were still too hard for them. Even children are able to shoot enemies from the other side of fog, using their search ability while they instinctively looked up to Hajime.

Even Pal… … Baltoferd of Certain Death, was completely charmed when shooting his Crossbow, while showing a sniper-like nature.

“One shot of certain death! ‘DO’ your was head blown off. In the name of “Certain Death””

Pal… .. Baltoferd of Certain Death recently gained the habit of saying such things. By the way, he called himself “Certain Death”. His first habitual saying was “Aim and Shoot!” but it was stopped by Hajime. He looked so displeased.

Back on topic, the Bearman tribe who fell into a panic were easily defeated without much resistance by the current Haulia tribe and their numbers fell in no time. Currently half of them had been killed in the vicinity.

“Regin-dono! If this keeps up-”

“Retreat!”

“Let me take care of the re-KUPE!?”

“Tontoo!?”

Having heard his subordinate advise him to retreat, Regin was hesitating because of anger from the incapacitated Jin and his killed subordinates. That hesitation wasn’t missed by the Haulia’s sniper. To the subordinate called Tonto that tried to advise his lord to retreat once again, an arrow accurately penetrated his temple.

Because of this Regin and his subordinates were shaken and fell into disorder. Kam and the others who thought it was a chance, attacked at once.

Arrows came flying from the fog and accurately aimed at their ankles. While distracted by that, a sharp attack came to reap the head. With an exquisite timing, the person who wanted to kill the one that shot arrows from the back ran into protruding spikes.

However, perhaps it was because that was their favorite move, a presence suddenly came from behind, and brought with it a fatal blow. Haulia tribe utilized their presence and teamwork to make fun of Regin and his subordinates. Regin and his subordinates shuddered at this. They thought, “Are they really that hetare and weak RabbitMan tribe!?”

The battle dragged on for a while, Regin and his subordinates were finally able to recover from their confusion while covered in wounds. They were somehow able to stand using their weapons as support. When the waves of attacks using the exquisite covering fire and teamwork subsided, all of them were panting. Regin and his subordinates were surrounded by Kam and the others, after being cornered with a gigantic tree to their backs.

“What happened, you “bleep”?! Is that all?! Wuss!”

“I heard you were the strongest tribe! You “bleep”! Even so you were “bleep”!

“Poise your weapons quickly! Are you “bleep”‘s already weak in the knees?!”

They thought it was not the RabbitMan tribe, with how they bombarded the other tribe with insults. The Bearman tribe which trembled in fear could only think, “What had happened to these guys!?” With broken spirits, some of them trembled while holding their heads. A big hairy man said, “Can you let us go?” with teary eyes… … truly a surreal spectacle.

“KU KU KU, did you have anything else to say? O strongest tribe?”

Kam let out that sarcasm with a truly evil expression. They who had awoken to their fighting spirit seemed to have thought about their circumstances when they were looked down upon. It was a

speech that couldn't be heard from the Kam of the past.

"Nuguu…"

Having heard Kam's objection, Regin's expression distorted in regret. He somehow recovered from the confusion and reasoning came back to his eyes. Even though he had been doused with cold water by Haulia tribe's strong assault, because of the incapacitated Jin, the flame of anger still burnt inside of him. But, because he felt a sense of responsibility to bring his surviving subordinates back alive, he regained his mind. He consciously knew it was his fault that they fell into such a predicament because he was the one that spurred them on.

"… … you can do anything to me. Boil me or burn me, just do whatever you like. However, I was the one who forcibly brought my subordinates. I want you to let them go"

"Wh-, Regin-dono!?"

"Regin-dono! That was…"

Having heard Regin's words, his subordinates started to make a commotion. It was because he tried to save his subordinates in exchange for his own life. To these subordinates, Regin scolded.

"Silence! … … it was my responsibility because of the blood that surged to my head clouded my eyes. RabbitMan… … no, Chief of

Haulia tribe. I know it is selfish of me. However, I want to save their lives! That's all."

Regin released his weapon then started to kneel while bowing his head. His subordinates knew of Regin's great pride as a warrior, so they understood how much resolution he had to bow his head to the enemy. That's why they couldn't obey his order to stay silent.

Kam's answer to Regin who was still bowing was…

"I refuse"

While throwing his knife.

"Uo!?"

Regin was able to dodge by a hairs-breadth. However, starting with Kam's attack, Regin and his subordinates were attacked from the surrounding with arrows and stones fired at high velocity, at once. Using their big axes as shields, Regin and subordinates desperately tried to defend themselves, and then from the Haulia tribe came laughter from the bottom of their heart, completing their attacks.

"Why!?"

Regin squeezed a voice as he groaned to ask them for the reason they attacked.

“Why? Aren’t you our enemies? Are other reasons necessary to kill you?”

Kam’s answer was a simple fact.

“Guh, but!”

“Above all… .. it’s enjoyable to crush and make fun of your arrogance! HA HA HA!”

“W-Wh-!? Bastards! To these guys-!”

Just as Kam said, Haulia tribe looked like they truly enjoyed it. Using Slingshots and Crossbows, they made fun of them by shooting from a safe area. Their appearances were those of people drunk on power. It looks like their heart’s didn’t mind killing people for the first time, even if it was their demi-human brethren. In short, they’ve become completely berserk.

With increasing severity in their attacks, Regin and his subordinates who had stayed close together, and desperately tried to defend were… … finally reaching their limit. Although they avoided fatal attacks, they were covered in wounds. They won’t be able to endure the next volley.

Kam, with a warped grin, ‘sutto’ raise his hand. Haulia tribe with

frenzied eyes start to aim with arrows and stones at the ready. Regin who thought this wasn't an appropriate place to die, gathered his power, and inside his mind he apologized to his subordinates.

Kam's hand, like a death god's scythe that hunted the lives of Regin and his subordinates, was lowered. Arrows and stones immediately shot. In slow motion, Regin continued to watch this without looking away, until…

"Stop it already!!!"

Zudoooooon!!

A spectacle where a white hammer blew everything away could be seen.

"Ha?"

Regin who was dumbfounded by it unintentionally let out that voice. However, that can't be helped. Immediately after they accepted their death, a rabbit-eared girl with pallid hair along with a giant hammer fell from the sky, then the hammer struck the ground. It resulted in the shockwave that blew away all the incoming arrows and stones. When they saw that, the surrounding Bearman tribe could only give a blank stare.

Shaking anger! That was the feeling that could be felt, of course it

came from Shia. The Sledgehammer made using the compression method had extraordinary mass. As if she didn't feel the weight, it was brandished with a 'Buonn' then generated a gust. 'Bishi' it was pointed toward Kam.

"Aghh! Seriously arghh! Father and everyone, please come to your sense already!"

Looking at Shia, Kam and the others who were initially stunned in astonishment, with 'ha' regained themselves while look toward her blaming.

"Shia, though I don't know why you did this, but please move from there. Or else we won't be able to kill the ones behind you, you know?"

"No, I won't move. I won't allow anymore than this!"

Having heard Shia's words, Kam and the others narrowed their eyes.

"Won't allow? Shia, don't tell me you wanted to be together with our enemy? According to your answer…"

"No, I don't care if these guys died"

"""" Is that okay!? """"

The Bearman tribe that thought she came to stop her tribe, unintentionally let out a remark to Shia.

“Of course. If I took it easy against enemies that came with killing intent, I wouldn’t be able to endure Yue-san’s training. Even I don’t have that naive thought anymore”

“Fumu, then why did you stop us”

Kam asked her. Haulia tribe also have inquiring expressions.

“Isn’t that obvious! Father and the others will be broken at this rate! And become more degenerated!”

“Broken? Degenerate?”

Having heard Shia’s word, Kam and the others can only put ‘I don’t understand” expressions.

“That’s right! Please remember it. Hajime-san was merciless against enemies, no talking was necessary, even more merciless, he enjoyed killing demonic beasts and people (…) things like that! Even during training, if you were told to kill the enemies, you shouldn’t have enjoyed it!”

“W-well, it’s not like we enjoy…”

“Just now, did father and the others know what kind of faces you made?

“Face? Well, even if you said that…”

Having heard Shia’s words, the Haulia tribe started to look at each others faces. Shia let out a calm breath, however, her voice clearly informed them.

“… … it was just like those Empire’s Soldiers that attacked us”

“Kh!?”

It shocked them, enough to blow off their frenzy. Their mood was as if they were doused with cold water. To have the same expressions as those who scorned their family with pleasure and caught them… … having actually witnessed that they understood the ugliness of their action. To be the same as those who snacthed their family away… … was an unbearable fact.

“Sh-Shia… I was…”

“Fuu, it looks like you have calmed down. Thank god. At worst, I thought I might have to beat you all down”

With ‘furifuri’, Shia swung the Sledgehammer around. Having heard Shia point that out, immediately Haulia tribe was trembling in front of the Sledgehammer while Shia loosened her cheeks a little.

“Well, it was your first battle, if you realized that now then it’ll be okay! It was Hajime-san’s fault after all! Although I understand the importance of fighting spirit, that was too much! Rather than fighting spirit, it was more like you became berserkers!”

This time, Shia was ‘puripuri’ angry at Hajime. A small voice of Shia muttering can be heard, “Just why did I fall for that kind of person”.

And at that time, a gunshot can be heard.

From Shia’s back, “Guwa!?” a groan could be heard, along with sound of something collapsing. Now that they think about it, while in a panic Shia and the others remember the existences that they’d forgotten about, then looked behind their back, there laid Regin who writhed in pain while holding his forehead.

“Why the heck are you trying to run away while their attention was diverted? Until their talk is over sit in seiza now!”

Hajime accompanied by Yue appeared from inside the fog. It seems while Shia and the others were immersed in their talk, Regin and his subordinates tried to run away, only to get shot. However, it

wasn't known why he used the non-lethal rubber bullet.

Although they heard Hajime's words, the Bearman tribe tried to vigilantly examine their surroundings to keep running away, but Hajime silenced them with "Pressure". While casting glances at them, Hajime and Yue looked at Shia and the others.

When Hajime saw Kam and the others, some of them felt awkward and looked the other way. However, immediately after words of apology came to Kam and the others.

"A, well, what to say, sorry. Because I was fine with it, I'd completely forgotten the shock of murder. It was my mistake. Un, I am sorry"

Shia and the others can only 'pokan' blankly stare at him with opened mouths. That was because they heard an unexpected but honest apology.

"Bo-boss!? Are you okay!? Did you hit your head!?"

"Medic! Medic! There is a person with serious injury here!"

"Boss! Please steady yourself!"

That's why it became such reactions. With veins popping on his head, his mouth twitched.

This time, Hajime himself truly thought it was his mistake. Because he didn't feel anything when he kills, he didn't consider the shock that was supposed to occur with it. No matter how much stronger he had become, he didn't have any experience in teaching, as a result, he almost broke the Haulia tribe's minds. Indeed, he thought it was dangerous, that's why he said those words of apology… … but their reaction was to doubt his sanity. Hajime thought, "Should I be angry?", he was hesitating while getting back into his usual attitude.

Hajime put this matter aside for now, approached Regin then put Donner's muzzle at his forehead.

"Well then, will it be a brave death or to survive and live in shame, which will it be?"

Having heard Hajime's words, the Bearman and Haulia tribe looked at him with surprised eyes. By his speech just now, they heard that he'd overlook the Bearman tribe depending on the situation. It was a serious proposal from Hajime who had no mercy and was unreserved against his enemies. Kam and the others looked at Hajime in sorrow while thinking, "As expected his head was…". Even though more veins popped on Hajime's head, but because there'd be no progress otherwise, he let it through(go) temporarily.

Regin looked at Hajime with a surprised expression. It was the man who had brought about the complete change in the Haulia tribe, he thought this man wouldn't show any mercy.

"… what does it mean, do you want to let us go?"

“Aa, you can return if you want, you know?”

“Conditions?”

To easily say that they could return, aside from Regin, the others were in commotion. From behind it could be heard, “If I hit his head now maybe it can help…”, was what Shia said with serious expression while alternating her gaze between her Sledgehammer and Hajime’s head. Voices of agreement could be heard from Kam and the others.

It was about the time that Hajime seriously thought of punishing them while more veins popped out. However, he worked harder to let that through(go).

“Aa, condition huh. When you reached Faea Belgaen I want you to say something to the Elders”

“… … A message?”

While he nervously thought about what kind of conditions he might demand, it turned out he only needed to be a messenger, and that took him aback. However, he was frozen when the content was spoken.

“”You owe me one””

“… … Kh!? That’s!”

“Well? What will you do? Will you accept it?”

Because he knew what that meant, Regin unintentionally let out a shout. Hajime was, with wind blowing from somewhere, waiting for Regin’s choice. “You owe me one” means, by letting the attacker return alive, there will be a time they must pay back their debt.

With the loss of one of the Elders, as well as how they agonized over ignoring the decision made by the Elders Conference to not intervene with him, if this message was passed on then they must unconditionally answer Hajime’s request.

If everything were to be seen objectively, in Jin’s situation and in Regin’s situation, where he one-sidedly tried to take revenge, coupled with the fact that they were allowed to live, the Elders Conference’s prestige will surely take a fall. They were outlaws because they disregarded the Elders. And can’t be said Hajime won’t one day turn his fang towards the Elders.

In other words, for Regin and his subordinates to survive meant that they’d brought back a weakness to their home country. Even after disregarding the decision from Elders Conference, they carried back a debt on their shoulders. Moreover, to return with half of their members dead after boasting about themselves as the strongest tribe… … just as Hajime had said they’d lived in shame.

Hajime choose to further his attack against Regin who wore a distorted expression.

“Add to that, you must remember that your subordinates’ deaths were your own responsibility, along with your crushing defeat against the Haulia”

“Guu”

There was a reason for Hajime to make such a condition. Of course it wasn’t out of benevolence. It was because there are details of the Seven Great Dungeons that he doesn’t know yet, so even though Faea Belgaen was an isolated country, there might be something else he must do in this country. There was also the tradition inherited from its founder after all. Hajime thought there might be little failures that will come along the way, for that sake, he thought that insurance was necessary.

To the worrying Regin, Hajime was ‘Gorik’ further pressing the muzzle.

“Decide it in five seconds. Once that’s over I’ll kill you one by one. “Quick judgement”. Isn’t that the basics (of a leader)?”

After that, Hajime began to count o~ne, two~ and Regin was panicking, however nothing comes to his mind.

“I, I understand. I wish for us to return!”

“I see. Then, go quickly. Don’t forget the message. If when the time comes for me to call for that and discover that you tried to fool me…”

A strong killing intent overflowed from Hajime’s whole body, accompanied with physical pressure. ‘Gulp’ the sound of gulp-ing resounded clearly.

“That day will be the end of Faea Belgaen”

No matter who looked at him, he had the touch of a bad debt collector, no, it’s more like a terrorist in this case. From behind, he could hear, “Thank goodness. It was the usual Hajime-san” and “Boss finally regained his mind!”, that kind of strange talk mixed with a relieved tone, well for now he’ll let it through(slide). He didn’t want to break the atmosphere that he made with so much effort. However, harsh punishment will follow.

With their pride broken by Haulia tribe and having heard how Regin desperately begged for his subordinates’ lives, they didn’t have the strength to protest and started to return home dejectedly. It might be because they are centered around a young one, they obediently accepted their defeat. But, for Regin, his influence in Faea Belgaen would likely disappear. There is also the possibility of being treated as fugitive. However, it was a mild punishment, after all he’d tried to take someone else’s life unjustly.

The Bearman tribe disappeared into the other side of the fog. After confirming that, Hajime turned around toward Shia and the others. At first, they were unable to see his expression because he looked

down, then somehow the atmosphere became strange. Kam and the others who felt dishonored to have fallen into such frenzy and madness, started to become engrossed in speaking to Hajime about a lot of things, while not noticing the atmosphere. Only Shia , “Huh? Isn’t this bad?”, said that while drenched in cold sweat.

Hajime started to look up while swaying. There was a big smile on his face. However, his narrowed eyes weren’t smiling at all. Finally, because he thought Hajime’s appearance was strange, Kam timidly asked him.

“Bo-Boss?”

“Yes, isn’t it a serious thing? I thought this time, it was my fault. To say you’ve reached the standard just like this, I must have thought of it as a brake”

“N-no, even if you say that… … it was because of our own immaturity…”

“Nono, it’s okay, you know? I admit it myself after all. That’s why, that’s why I thought to honestly apologize… … but you had quite the reaction, didn’t you? Well, I understand. After all my usual attitude was like that… … however, however… … this out of place feeling I have, I must let it out… … you understand what that means, right?”

“N-no. We were a little…”

Kam also thought, “Ah, this is bad. He is angry now”, with cold sweat rapidly pouring out of him, step by step he tried to retreat. Maybe because some of the Haulia remember the training, they suddenly stood still while crying and whimpering.

And at that time, “Now is my chance!”, was what Shia thought then she instantly started to turn her feet to escape. She didn’t forget to make a man nearby as a shield.

However…

DOPANn!!

One bullet passed through between that man’s leg, hit the ground and ricocheted when it struck a tree’s root finally hitting Shia in the butt.

“Hakyun!”

It was one of Hajime’s gun skills “Polygonal Shot”. That’s how he aimed his shot at Shia’s butt. It was a useless gun skill, that could be thought as not that useless, that he’d uselessly practiced. Because of the impact from the bullet Shia raised a scream and ‘pyon’ jumped, only to collapse on the ground with her butt in the air. ‘Shuu-‘ Smoke rose from her butt. Shia was twitching in pain.

Having seen Shia convulsing and Hajime’s gun skill, Kam and the others were trembling in fear. The man who had a bullet pass

between his leg covered his groin with both hands while teary eyed. He patted his groin, because when the bullet passed, it caught the shockwave from the bullet.

Without doing anything else, Hajime put back Donner into its holster, then his hanya-like smile returned. Finally, he yelled out with angry tone.

“For now, everyone will be hit once!”

Waaaaaa—!!

All of Haulia members immediately scattered trying to escape just like newborn spiders. For a while, screams and an angry roar could be heard resounding inside the Sea of Trees.

The only one who remained in her place was Shia with smoke rising from her butt, and

“… … when will we go to the Great Tree?”

The mutters from Yue who wasn’t involved with all the commotion.

Arifureta: Volume 4 Chapter 9

The Great Tree's Secret

Deep inside the fog, Hajime and his party advanced toward the Great Tree. They left the fighting to Kam, while the other Haulia members scattered into their surroundings, looking for enemies as part of their training. Because the fact that unpreparedness is one's greatest foe already is carved into their flesh, all members wore serious expressions. Most of all, the blue bruises on their bodies made it so it couldn't be helped…

"Uu~, it's still tingling~"

Shia was whining while rubbing her butt. Since before, she looked at Hajime with resentful eyes.

"Stop looking at me like that, it's annoying."

"To say that it's annoying was too much. It's not common sense to shoot at a girl's butt. Moreover, using that useless high skill-"

"That can also be said to you. You seriously thought to hit my head and use another person as a shield to run away… … that was not something a normal person would do."

Near them, a man from the Haulia tribe nodded his head.

“Uu, it was the result of education by Yue-san…”

“… … I was the one that raised Shia.”

“… … I can’t comment on that.”

While boasting that, Yue looked at Hajime as if saying “Praise me.” Hajime was averting his gaze making good use of “Let it through skill”.

After they advanced for 15 minutes while chatting harmoniously, their party finally arrived at the Great Tree.

Hajime’s first opinion when he looked at the Great Tree was,

“… … the heck this is”

, while half-surprised and half-doubting. Yue also wore the slight expression of someone who had her expectations crumbling. The two of them were imagining it using the scale and a larger version of the trees in Faea Belgaen.

However, the real Great Tree was… … splendidly withered.

Its size was not that far off from their imagination. Its diameter alone could be estimated around 50 meters. There is also the bizarre difference from the surrounding trees. While the surrounding trees had the ever expanding green leaves, only the Great Tree was withered.

“The Great Tree was already withered even before the founding of Faea Belgaen. However, it didn’t rot. Ever the never changing withered tree. With the surrounding fog’s nature and the forever-withered-without-rotting Great Tree, this place became a sacred place. Well, even with that said, although it could be called a tourist spot…”

Kam explained to Hajime and Yue making inquiring faces. While hearing the explanation, Hajime looked around the Great Tree’s roots. Just as Alfrerick had said, there was a lithograph built.

“This is… … just like Orcus’ door’s…”

“… … Nn, the same crest”

On the lithograph there were seven system-like squares with seven crests engraved on top of it. It was completely the same as the one on Orcus’ room’s door. To prove it, Hajime took out Orcus’ ring. The pattern on the ring was completely the same as one of the patterns on the Lithograph after all.

“It was the entrance to the Great Dungeon after all… but… …

what should we do about this?”

Hajime approached the Great Tree and started to ‘thud thud’ hit it and of course there was no change, when he tried to ask Kam and the others if they know something about this tree, they only had No as an answer. Although he already heard all of the traditions from Alfrerick, there wasn’t any concerning the entrance. There was a possibility that he hid it so Hajime started to think, “Should I collect the debt?”,

At that time, Yue who was observing the lithograph raised her voice.

“Hajime… … look at this.”

“Nn? Is something there?”

What Yue noticed was on the other side of the lithograph. There were empty dents that corresponded with the seven crests on the other side.

“This is…”

Hajime put the Orcus ring in his hand to the dent that he saw corresponded to Orcus’ crest.

Then… … the lithograph began to faintly shine.

Wondering what happened, the surrounding Haulia tribe that were on lookout began to gather. For a while, they looked at the shining lithograph which lights gradually faded and somehow characters appeared in its place. Something was written there.

Four proofs.
Power of Rebirth.
Guidepost of Spun Bond.
A new trial will be opened to the one who has those proof.

“… … What does it mean?”

“… … Rhe four proofs… … maybe, wasn’t it referring to the other Dungeons’ proofs?”

“… … Then, what does the Power of Rebirth and Guidepost of Spun Bond mean?”

Shia answered to Hajime who puzzled over it.

“U~n, Guidepost of Spun Bond, wasn’t that it? Whether you got demi-human race as guides or not. Only demi-humans are able to move around easily in the Sea of Trees, and to gain the demi-humans as guides in the Sea of Tree was an exception among exception”

“… … I see. It was something like that”

“… … Next was regeneration… … Me?”

Yue pointed at herself who owns the special magic, “Auto Regeneration”. To test it, she thinly gave a cut to her finger to activate “Auto Regeneration” while moving to touch the Great Tree… … but there was no change at all.

“Muu… … it looks like that was wrong.”

“… … nn~, to the withered tree… … Power of Rebirth… … along with four proofs… … it’s possible that the four proofs meant we have to conquer half of the Seven Great Dungeons, then we might obtain the age of gods magic concerning rebirth, was it something like that?”

Hajime was wondering whether they must use that to restore the withered tree. Yue also gave a consenting face.

“Haa~, damn. So it was impossible to conquer it right now… … even though it was troublesome, there is nothing else we can do but to go to the other dungeons…”

“Nn…”

Hajime could only grind his teeth having come this far. Yue also regretted it. However, because they couldn't enter the Great Dungeon now, although it worried them, it couldn't be helped. They switched their target to obtaining three more proofs for now.

Hajime then gathered the Haulia tribe.

"As you've heard, we are aiming to conquer the other Great Dungeons now. The promise that you kept to guide us to the Great Tree is over now. If it's the current you, even without Faea Belgaen's protection, you'll be able to survive inside the Sea of Trees. That means, this is good bye"

Then, he took a peek at Shia. His eyes asked her if she wanted to leave behind some words, and Shia understood perfectly that now was the time to voice her intentions. Even though she'll be back, conquering three of the Great Dungeons would take much time. She wouldn't be able to meet her family during that time.

Shia nodded, then took a step forward to talk to Kam and the others"

"Fath- "Boss! I have something to say!" … … huuh, father? This is my turn…"Kam took a step forward while ignoring Shia. 'Bishi', then stood at attention. On his side, "Father? Wait, father?", Shia's words could be heard and as if he was a British guardsman he just looked ahead while standing upright.

"A~, what is it?"

For the time being Shia called out, father? father?, but was ignored, while Hajime asked Kam. Kam, while not looking at Shia and ignoring her, started to tell the consensus from the Haulia tribe.

“Boss, please take us along!”

“Eh! Everyone also wanted to go with Hajime-san!?”

Shia was surprised at Kam’s words. In the discussion ten days ago, what happened with that mood when you were sending me off!?, were the words she said.

“We are Haulia but at the same time not Haulia! We are Boss’s subordinates! By all means, take us along! This is our tribe’s consensus!”

“Wait a sec, father! I’ve never heard of that! Rather, for what purpose did I have to go through those hardships…”

“I admit, we are jealous of Shia!”

“He admits that! He really said that! Really, what happened in those ten days!”

While Kam said the tribe's consensus, he ignored Shia's remark. What is this situation?, was what Hajime thought then frankly answered.

"I refuse."

"Why!?"

Kam tried to ask the reason for Hajime's quick reply. The other Haulia tribe members also approached Hajime in impatience.

"Of course it's because you will only be hindrances, you idiot-"

"But!"

"Don't get caught up in the moment. For our journey, even 180 days is too fast!"

"Is that true!?"

In addition to Kam and the others holding on to him, they started to think, "Even if it was not permitted, we will follow!" It seems because of the General Hartman-like(…)'s training, a strange sense of trust and reverence was born. If this keeps up, they'll really follow Hajime into town. Because he didn't want any to riot, he reluctantly gave them a condition.

“Then, that is. I want you to stay here to keep training. The next time I come to the Sea of Trees, if I can use you then I’ll make you my subordinates”

“… … Is there any falsehood in those words?”

“None at all.”

“If you lied, we’ll continue to call Boss’ name in the humans’ towns, as if we are creating a new religion, okay?”

“Y-you have quite the bad sense…”

“Well, that is because we have pride as Boss’ subordinates.”

What a bold subordinate that made Hajime’s cheeks twitch. Yue was ‘pon pom’ patting Hajime’s arm to comfort him. Hajime let out a sigh, next he looked up at the sky thinking the next time he came to the Sea of Trees will be troublesome.

“Sob, no one looked at me… … even though it’s the day I set off…”

Shia who was thrown to the side wrote the character ? on the ground, while no one minded her as expected.

* * *

Hajime, Yue, and Shia were escorted by Kam and the others to the boundary of the Sea of Trees, and once again they got on the magic-driven two-wheeler and dashed into the plain. The order of seating was Yue, Hajime, then Shia. Since he noticed Shia's degree of clingy-ness had increased from the time in the Raisen Grand Canyon, Hajime tried ignoring that. Although, his reaction was immediately discovered by Yue who sat in front of him.

On his shoulder, Shia asked a question.

"Hajime-san. Now that I remember I've never heard about it, where was our next destination?"

"Ah? I never said it?"

"I never heard anything."

"… … I already knew"

To the elated Yue, Shia let out a groan in protest.

"I-I am your comrade now, so please tell me something like that! Communication is important!"

“My bad. Our next destination is Raisen Grand Canyon”

“Raisen Grand Canyon?”

Having heard Hajime’s words, Shia put on a questioning expression. Currently, the Seven Great Dungeons that are already confirmed, excluding “Haltina Sea of Trees”, were “Guryuen Great Desert’s Volcanic Mountain” and “Shune Snowfield’s Ice Cave”. Because it was certainly there, doesn’t that make it the best destination?, was what she thought. Maybe because he guessed her question, Hajime started to say his intent.

“For now, I don’t even know if there was a Great Dungeon in Raisen Grand Canyon. Shune Snowfield is in the demon’s country so it’d be troublesome. Although it’s better to go to the Big Volcanic Mountain for now, if we go while passing Raisen that spreads from east to west, we’ll get there anyway. Maybe we’ll find a dungeon along the way, right?”

“T-to cross over the Raisen Grand Canyon…”

Instinctively, Shia’s cheeks twitched. Raisen Grand Canyon was popular as an execution ground. Recently, it was also the place where her family was almost annihilated. To have thought of that place as a highway shook her mind.

Hajime, who knew Shia was shaken because she was glued to him, revealed an amazed expression.

“You know, believe in your own power a little. For the current you, the demonic beasts inside the canyon aren’t that different from the demonic beasts in the boundary. Didn’t you know we can’t use magic inside Raisen? For you who specialized in body strengthening, it’s possible to move around without any hindrance. Rather, it’d be the stage for you”

“… … I am ashamed as your master”

“Uu~, I am ashamed~”

Yue looked at Shia with amazed eyes. Shia tried to change the topic.

“Th-then, because we are going to Raisen Grand Canyon, are we going to camp today? Or, are we going to the nearest village or town?”

“If possible, I wanted to arrange some seasoning for food, for the sake of the future it’d be great to get some material from the town. According to the map I’ve seen, there will be a town somewhere along here”

For extra measure, Hajime wanted to eat real food < < .. > >. Also, in the future, he needed money to buy things in town. He wanted to exchange the materials he had with money before it rotted. One more thing, he wanted to try to settle in a place before setting off to the Raisen Grand Canyon.

“Haa~ is that so… … thank god”

Having heard Hajime’s words, Shia somehow showed a relieved expression. Hajime who was dumbfounded by it, “What is it”, asked her.

“Well~, from Hajime-san’s story, I thought you’d be satisfied by eating Raisen Grand Canyon’s demonic beasts’ meat… … Yue-san only needs Hajime-san’s blood so she wouldn’t have any problem… … I was thinking how I should persuade you for my personal food~, I am glad it was just my imagination. So Hajime-san also eats normal food!”

“Of course! Who likes to eat demonic beasts! … you, what did you think I am…”

“A new kind of demonic beast called Predator?”

“OK, you, I’ll tie you up until we reach the town”

“Wa-, stop, from where did you pull that out, that collar! Really, stop~ don’t put that on me~, Yue-san don’t just look, help me!”

“… … you reap what you sow”

In a sense, the three who advanced on the plain made a commotion that showed their good relationship.

After driving for several hours, finally the day grew dark and the town was finally seen in front of them. Hajime was glad, ever since he saw the sky after getting out of the Abyss, he finally got the feeling that “I am back”. Yue also looked somewhat excited. Yue turned her head slightly then their eyes met, and smiles floated on their faces.

“Umm～, although it was such a good atmosphere, this collar, can you release it? For some reason I couldn’t remove it… … umm, did you hear? Hajime-san? Yue-san? Wait, please don’t ignore me～ I am going to cry now! I am going to cry so hard that you’ll be depressed by it!”

Hajime and Yue only replied with their smiles.

Arifureta: Volume 4 Chapter 10

In Brook Town I

They can see a town in the distance. It was a small town enclosed with a surrounding moat and hedges. There was a gate facing the highway, with a hut by its side. It might be the guards' post. Even though it was a small town, there was the arrangement for guards. Because of that, Hajime who thought they'd be able to do quality shopping, loosened his cheeks.

"… … If you are in a good mood, can you take off the collar already?"

Shia with a disappointed expression earnestly asked Hajime who smiled while looking at the town. Fixed on Shia's neck was a collar with a black body embedded with a small inconspicuous crystal. It was something sturdy that Hajime used as punishment for Shia's verbal slip. Because for some reason she couldn't take it off, Shia asked Hajime to remove it only to have her words pass through Hajime's ears.

Slowly, Hajime and his party could clearly see the town, so he put the magic-driven two-wheeler into the "Treasure Box", and switched to walking on foot. It was because it'd cause a commotion to arrive with a jet black bike, after all.

Along the way, Shia kept 'bla bla' complaining. As expected, that just went through his ears and they finally arrived at the town's

gate. As he thought, the hut beside the gate was a guard's post, with an armed man coming out of it. He was equipped with leather armor and a long sword on his waist, rather than a soldier he looked more like an adventurer. That adventurer-like man called Hajime and his party to stop.

"Please halt. Show your status plate. Also, what are your objectives coming to this town?"

It might be something like a regulation, because he somehow looked unmotivated. Hajime pulled out his status plate while answering the guard's question.

"Our main objective is to secure rations. They're to be used for our journey"

An indifferent voice, 'Hu~m', can be heard from the guard while he checked Hajime's status plate. After that, he blinked his eyes, held the plate a little farther, then rubbed his eyes. Having seen the guardsman done that, Hajime with cold sweat thought, "Ah, this is bad, I forgot to hide that".

Inside status plate, there is a function to hide the numerical value and skills' column. Even for adventurer and mercenary, the leak of combat ability proved to be fatal. Hajime immediately tried to deceive the guard by telling him a lie.

"A while before, I was attacked by demonic beasts. It looks like it broke at that time"

“I-it broke? That was, well…”

The guard was perplexed. It was no wonder. After all, Hajime’s status plate didn’t display the level, and the numerical value of his stats, as well as his skills column were all over the place. Even though he sometimes heard of people losing the status plate, for it to be broken (in sense of it being bugged) was something he had never heard of. Normally he would just laugh it off, but something unbelievable was displayed after all, so he didn’t understand how to judge it.

To further his attack, Hajime shrugged his shoulders with a manner of someone totally bothered by it.

“If it wasn’t broken, isn’t that display too strange? It’s as if I am a monster. Mr. Guard, do I look like a monster that could destroy a town with just the tip of my finger?”?

To Hajime who used a joking gesture by opening both of his hand, the guard only gave out a wry smile. If what the status plate displayed was correct, then he would be a monster that easily surpassed even the demon kings and heroes. Even without hearing that explanation, he already considered the plate to be broken.

If he know he was truly a monster, surely, this guard would have fainted. Hajime who boldly told that lie, looked at Shia and Yue who had amazed expressions.

“Haha, well, of course I don’t see that. Even though I have never heard of any bug in the display, well, there is always a first for everything… … and those two…”

Turning his gaze to Yue and Shia, the guard asked to see their status plate. Only to be stunned. With his face dyed red, he looked alternately at Yue and Shia with a blank and unfocused look. Even though it was said before, Yue is a beautiful girl with a bisque doll-like appearance. Shia, while quiet, was also a beautiful girl that gave off a mysterious feeling. In other words, the guardsman was truly charmed by them.

Hajime unnaturally cleared his throat, then ‘Hah’, the guard turned his gaze to Hajime in panic.

“While we were attacked by the demonic beasts, this girl lost her plate. About this Rabbitman… … you understand, right?”

Maybe because he accepted that, the guard nodded in consent then gave back Hajime’s status plate.

“Even so, just where did you get your hands on such a beauty. Aren’t gray-haired members of the Rabbitman tribe rare? Are you actually a rich person?”

The guard asked Hajime with envy and jealousy mixed into his voice, while continuously taking peeks at the two. Hajime only shrugged his shoulders without giving any answer.

“Well whatever. You may pass.”

“Aa, thanks. Oops, wait a sec. Where can I sell raw materials?”

“Ang? If it’s that, there is the adventurer guild if you go straight through the central road. If you want to personally bring it to the store, just ask the guild. They will give you a simple map of this town.”

“Ooh, you’ve been so kind to us. Thanks”

After receiving the information from the guard, Hajime and his party passed through the gate and entered the town. From the gate it seems that this town’s name was Brook. Inside the town was a lively atmosphere. Even though it wasn’t at the level of Hol-ad town which he’d seen at the outskirts of Orcus, there are quite a lot of stalls along with voices advertising their wares, and sounds of people haggling could be heard.

With such liveliness, it somehow lifted one’s feeling. Not just Hajime, Yue’s eyes began to look happy. However, since before, Shia was trembling and staring at Hajime with teary eyes.

Without saying anything, she only stared at him with teary eyes and because it made him anxious he let out a sigh. “To interrupt my happy mood” , was what Hajime complained in his mind while giving a glance at Shia.

“What is it? Even though we’re finally inside a town, for you to make a face similar to a gorilla demonic beast that desperately tried to block a massive rock that fell from above”

“Who’s a gorilla! Rather, how do you know what kind of defeated form that is! If it’s Hajime-san, then it’d be blown in one move! It’s somehow pitiful just by imagining it!”

“… … that’s something like poking your side with teary eyes”

“Is that a follow-up attack!? That’s too cruel! Uh, that isn’t it!”

Shia was busily rebutting while angry. She tried to appeal, “I am unhappy!”, with her whole body while flailing her hands. By the way, the episode with the gorilla-like demonic beast was a story from the time he experimented to polish the mass compression method. By no means did he not enjoy the bullying. Yue was happily poking at that time. Also, this demonic beast was the one who owned the “Great Arm” special magic.

“It’s this! This collar! Because of this I was misunderstood as a slave! Hajime-san, if you understand then remove it! Uu, it’s cruel~, aren’t we companions~”

It seems that was what Shia was angry about. Even though they are travel companions, she was shocked to have received the same treatment as a slave. Naturally, the collar that Hajime put on her wasn’t a slave’s collar, and it didn’t have the power to restrain Shia. Even Shia understood that. But, whatever is said, a shock is a shock.

Having seen that Shia, Hajime scratched his head then looked into Shia's eyes.

"You know, for a non-slave demi-human, moreover a popular and high-in-demand rabbitman wouldn't be able to walk freely inside a town, right? Added to that, a gray-haired one like you would attract attention along with your outstanding figure and style. If you declared that you weren't someone's slave, you'd be instantly marked down when we entered the town. After that, there would be a storm of kidnappers coming. It'll be trouble-… … why are you being giddy for?"

While explaining things, Hajime suddenly glared at Shia, who became embarrassed with blushing cheeks when she heard the explanation. Yue also coldly looked at Shia.

"Mo-mou, Hajime-san. To start saying something like that in front of everyone. To say, I have an outstanding figure and style, the cutest in the world and charming, mou! It was embarras–bugera!?"

Yue's golden right straight found its way into the cheek of Shia who was caught up in the moment. With a love filled mind, Shia raised a scream then collapsed. Without using body strengthening, she got up while rubbing her cheek that was reddened in a different way from before.

"… … Don't get carried away"

“… … I’b sobby, Yue-zan”

Having heard Yue’s cold words, Shia’s body trembled. While amazed by their appearance, Hajime continued his explanation.

“A~ I will say the conclusion. Inside human territory, I am protecting you by saying you’re a slave. If I didn’t do it, there’d be a lot of troubles and it’ll be all because of you”

“That is… … although I understand it…”

She understood the reason and merit. But, Shia had an unhappy expression, felt it hard to accept that after all. Because she had a strong yearning to be called their companion, she was unable to simply accept it. This time it was Yue who told Shia.

“… … Don’t care what the small fries think of you”

“Yue-san?”

“… … The most important thing is it was enough if the ones important to you understand you. … … isn’t it?”

“… … … … Th-that’s right. That’s right.”

“… … Nn, even though I am reluctant… … Shia is someone I recognize as a companion… … Don’t mind the small things”

“… … Yue-san… … ehehe. Thank you very much”

She was a vampire princess who wielded her power and listened to the masses. Even though she was betrayed, she found a new answer that even little words were able to carry a massive weight. That’s why, her words were able to break the stone inside Shia’s heart. All members of the Haulia tribe, even Hajime and Yue, understood that Shia has become important to Hajime and Yue. It was unnecessary to go through the trouble of getting 1,000 people to understand it. Of course, even if they could do it, there was no need to do that…

Having heard Yue’s words, Shia shyly smiled while taking a peek at Hajime. She was expecting him to say something.

Hajime who felt it can’t be helped, reluctantly started to spin his words.

“Well, I won’t abandon you if you were attacked because they found out you’re not a slave”

“Even if it will make everyone in this town your enemies?”

“You know, didn’t I already do that with the Empire’s soldiers?”

“Then, you’ll do it even if the enemy was a country! Fufu!”

“What did you say? No matter even if it was the world or the gods it won’t change anything. If it was an enemy, no matter who it is, I will fight”

“Kufufu, did you hear that? Yue-san. Did you hear what Hajime-san just said? We are important to him, right?”

“… … Hajime’s only important person is me”

“Wa-, please read the mood! At this time, you should honestly say the usual “… … Nn”!”

Shia was happy and enjoying it, despite her complaints. Hearing that, when the time comes, he will even fight against the world. As expected it is something that’d make a woman happy. Especially if the other person was the one you’re in love with.

Hajime who narrowed his eyes looked at the two playing with each other (or so it looks like to him), started to explain Shia’s collar.

“One more thing, because that collar incorporates telepathy ore and a special ore, use it if you deem it necessary. It’s able to be used by directly pouring magic into it”

“Telepathy ore and a special ore?”

Telepathy ore is a mineral that’s able to transfer thoughts. It was an ore created by Creation magic that gave the user the skill “Telepathy”, the amount of magic usage is proportional to the distance. Most of all, currently in this age there was nothing like telepathy or the telephone, so everyone who has the same ore within the range will be able to hear the secret talk.

The special ore itself was created using Creation magic to give the user the skill “Presence Perception” + Specific Perception””. When Specific Perception was used, it is possible to catch only a specific presence among a crowd, and identify a presence among many. When it was used, it’d take the role as a beacon by pouring magic into it. The strength of the beacon is proportional to the amount of magic used.

Having heard Hajime’s explanation, Shia raised a praising voice.

“By the way, that collar can be removed by giving it a certain amount of magic, you know?”

“I see~, in other words… … because you wanted to always hear my voice, and know my whereabouts, is that what Hajime-san felt? Mou, do you like me that much? As expected, it was a little too-, rather, ah, it’s not like I hate i-Bbaberun!?”

“… … Don’t get carried away”

“‘Sob’, I’b sobby”

With a beautiful picturesque curve, Yue’s kick came flying into the back of Shia’s head, who collapsed after yelling a strange scream. A cold voice could be heard from Yue. Even though she was weak at close combat… … Yue delivered a splendid high kick, then Shia apologized with tears in her eyes. Even if she recognized her as a journey companion, it seems she won’t forgive her if Shia tried to approach Hajime. Most of all, it was questionable whether Shia’s behaviour and speech could be called an approach.

With such a happy(?) mood, they continued walking on the main street until they discovered a signboard with a large sword drawn on it. It was the same signboard as the one seen in Hol-ad town’s adventurer guild, although the scale was two sizes smaller than the one in Hol-ad.

After confirming the signboard, Hajime stepped inside by opening the door with composure.

Arifureta: Volume 5 Chapter 1

In Brook Town II

Because guilds have the image of a place where rough people gather, Hajime thought it'd be a dirty place, but it was unexpectedly clean. There was a counter in front of the entrance, and a restaurant to the left. There were some people that seemed to be adventurers, eating and chatting. Judging from how no one ordered sake, it might be because they didn't serve it. For those who wanted to drink, they had to go to a bar.

When Hajime and his party entered the guild, naturally the adventurers turned their gazes toward them. At first, because it was just three unknown people they only paid a little attention to them, but when their gazes turned toward Yue and Shia, the curiosity in their eyes increased. There were those who, "Hou", raised voices of admiration, there were those who stared blankly in admiration just like the guard, and then there were those that were beaten by their girlfriends. It was just like adventurers to not stop at a slap.

It was a favorable template, even though there were some people that tried to mess with them, it seemed that they logically held back and simply observed. Because there was no need to keep standing still, Hajime happily went toward the counter.

In the counter was a charming… … smiling auntie. Her build was good. Her width about twice Yue's. Apparently a beautiful woman as a receptionist was just a fantasy. It was like how the real and professional maids on Earth were aunties. No matter which world

you're in the harsh reality is the same. By the way, Hajime was just normal, he didn't expect to see a beautiful woman as the receptionist. If he said he didn't then he didn't. That's why, Hajime wanted Yue and Shia to stop their icy glares. From a little while ago, their glares had been pierced into him.

Maybe because she knew what was going on in the mind of Hajime and his party, the auntie kept giving them a charming.

"Even though you have a flower in both hands, is that still insufficient? It is regrettable that I am not a beautiful receptionist"

… … The auntie probably didn't use special magic for mindreading. Hajime, with twitching cheeks was somehow able to give an answer.

"No, I have never thought about that"

"Ahahahaha, are you underestimating a woman's intuition? I am simply able to understand a man's simplicity. Don't try to avert your eyes too much, it'll reduce your credibility, you know?"

"… … I am deeply impressed"

Hajime's answer was, "Oh my, to be old and suddenly giving out a sermon, because it was our first meeting, can you forgive me?", an unapology-like apology to the auntie, after all it's not like he hated her. The adventurers who were eating, took a peek at Hajime while

saying, “Ah～ he also got preached to by the auntie～”. It seemed the adventurers were behaving because of this auntie.

“Well then, once more, welcome to adventurer guild, Brook’s branch. What is your business?”

“Aa, I want to know where to sell raw materials”

“Selling raw materials it is. Then, can you show me your status plate first?”

“Nn? Is it necessary to show your status plate for purchasing something?”

To Hajime’s question, the auntie was, “Oh my?”, showing that kind of expression.

“Aren’t you an adventurer? Certainly, the status plate isn’t necessary to purchase something, but if you are confirmed as an adventurer there will be a 10% increase in the price of the things you sell”

“I see”

Just as auntie said, there were various privileges as an adventurer. It was because the adventurers were the ones that collected raw materials such as magic stones and recovery medicine that’s

necessary for everyday lives. Also, it wasn't known when the town would be attacked by demonic beasts, so no amateur tried to collect those raw materials. It was natural to give out privileges corresponding to the dangers.

"There are other benefits, such as 10-20% discount for hotels and shops associated with the guild, and it's possible to freely use carriages for people with a high rank. What will you do? Do you want to register? The fee is 1,000 ruta."

Ruta is this world's common currency that's used in the northern continent, Tortoise. Zagaruta ore is the special ore used to make this currency, the difference in colours are made by mixing it with different minerals using a special method along with the carved seal. Blue, red, yellow, purple, green, white, black, silver, and gold were the colours, from the left the values are 1, 5, 10, 50,100, 500, 1.000, 5.000, and 10.000 ruta respectively. Surprisingly, its value was the same as Japan's.

"U~n, I see. Even though it was explained with great effort, I can't register now. I am sorry, I don't have any money at all. Is it possible for me to sell it first? Of course, the first sale value is good as it is."

"Don't say that in front of these two cuties. I will help, it's not like it'll inconvenience me, you know?"

Auntie was so cool. Hajime decided to accept her goodwill, and showed his status plate.

He made sure to conceal it this time, it only displayed name, age, sex and job. Although auntie also asked for Yue and Shia's, but was cut off. Although these two didn't have plates to begin with, it was possible to ask for it. However, their status's numerical value and skills column would be seen by auntie.

Although Hajime wanted to see their statuses, he thought their special magic would be described on the skills column for sure. If these three existences were publicized it'd only be troublesome, so they decided to put it on hold.

New information was written on the returned status plate. There was an occupation column beside the job column, what was written there was "adventurer" along with a blue mark at its side.

This blue mark was the adventurer's rank. It continued with red, yellow, purple, green, white, black, silver, and gold. … you might have noticed it. That's right, adventurer ranks are the same as currency. In other words, blue ranked adventurers were, "Your value is only 1 ruta, ptchoe", or something along that line. It was painful. Surely, the previous guild master who thought of this system was someone twisted.

By the way, the limitations for someone with a non-combat profession was black. It seems because the black rank barely reached four digits, you'd be applauded to make it that far. Someone who reached gold rank would be the object of admiration, you should be able to understand how the colours stand for adventurers now.

"If you're a man, then work hard to reach black, okay? Don't show any uncool sides to these girls."

“Aa, I’ll do that. Then, is it okay to sell them now?”

“No problem. I have the qualifications for appraisal, so show it to me.”

It seemed auntie was not only a receptionist but also able to appraise sold items. She was an excellent auntie. Hajime already took out the raw materials from the “Treasure Box” and placed it in a bag beforehand. Those items were demonic beasts’ furs, nails, fangs and magic stones. When the container was put on the counter and the raw materials were seen, auntie displayed an astonished expression.

“Th-these are-!”

She timidly took it, then ascertained the items inside-out. After holding her breath in nervousness, auntie finally looked up, then she gave out a sigh and looked at Hajime.

“You’ve brought something unexpected. Aren’t these… … from the Sea of Trees’ demonic beasts?”

“Aa, that’s right.”

Hajime also wanted to remove the template here, that was why the raw materials from Abyss’s demonic beasts couldn’t be taken out

here. If unknown materials were taken out, it'd immediately cause a big commotion. Even though he was hesitating because the raw materials from the Sea of Trees' demonic beasts were also unusual, he didn't have any other raw materials, so he sold that. Having seen auntie's reaction, it was unusual after all.

If he took out raw materials from the Abyss, it'd be like, the Guild head appeared! Sudden raise in rank! The Receptionist lady's eyes became hearts!, it'd be that kind of template… … it was a good thing he didn't do that. That's why, Hajime wanted Yue and Shia to stop looking at him with icy glares, because it made his body tremble.

"… … You are also unexpected" Auntie looked at Hajime in amazement.

"I don't understand what you mean."

Even though he had changed, his otaku soul couldn't be erased… … somehow it became like this. Hajime who pretend to not know anything, looked away from reality.

"Because there are a lot of good quality raw materials from the Sea of Trees, thanks for selling them."

Auntie, even though she didn't know anything, continued to speak. It seemed she was capable of reading the mood. She truly was a pleasant and excellent auntie.

“Are these unusual after all?”

“You know. A human’s sense of direction would be driven out of control inside the Sea of Trees, because once you get lost there would be no second time. It’s a place with high risk. That’s why no one tries to go there. Although it’s possible to buy demi-human slaves to enter it, it’s more profitable to sell them at central. They will sell at a high price, and it’ll make it easier to raise one’s name.”

Auntie took a peek at Shia. She probably guessed that they received Shia’s help to go around the Sea of Trees. It seems, thanks to Shia, she didn’t become suspicious of the raw materials from the Sea of Trees.

After auntie assessed all of the raw materials, she presented the money. The value of the sold items were 487,000 ruta. It was an excellent amount.

“Is this much okay? I think it’ll sell for more at central.”

“Well, I don’t mind this much.”

Hajime received 51 pieces of the Ruta currency. This money, maybe because of an ore characteristic was strangely light, that’s why it wasn’t bothersome to carry more than 50 pieces ruta currency. After all, if it was a bother, Hajime could just put it inside the “Treasure Box.”

“By the way, I heard from the guardsman that I can get a simple map of this town…”

“Aa, please wait a moment… … here, this is it. Please refer to it because the recommended inn and stores are written there.”

On the given map, there was elaborate useful information and descriptions written with simplicity that made it a wonderful item. He felt it was rather unbelievable for this to be free of charge.

“Oi oi, is this okay? For such a splendid map to be free of charge. I thought it’d need some money to make something of this level…”

“I don’t mind, I only do it as a hobby. For those that have the job to make it, that’s just like a scribble.”

Auntie truly an excellent person. Just why did this person become the receptionist of the guild?, was the the level he wanted to rebut. Surely, there might be a sublime drama behind it.

“I see. Well, it helps.”

“That’s a good word. Moreover, because you have money, please just stay here for a while. Although this town’s public order isn’t bad, there might be some reckless men out there, because of these two.”

Auntie who paid attention until the last minute, truly was a good person. Hajime answered, “I’ll do that”, while grinning, then turned his feet toward the entrance. Yue and Shia followed suit after bowing their head. Some adventurers in the restaurant were sneakily whispering, while their eyes were glued to Yue and Shia to the end.

“Fumu, in a lot of ways, they are interesting people…”

Auntie happily muttered toward their backs.

* * *

Hajime and his party, more than a map calling it a guidebook, then decided on an inn called “Masaka Inn.” According to the description, it served delicious food with good security, it also had a bath. The last description was what decided it. Although the price was rather expensive, there were no problems because they had the money for it. Slightly, they thought what followed was that “Masaka”…

On the inn’s first floor, there was a dining room filled with some people having their meal. When Hajime and his party entered, gazes were focused on Yue and Shia as promised. They ignored that, when they arrived at the counter-like place, what appeared was a girl around 15 that cheerfully greeted them.

“Welcome-, welcome to “Masaka Inn”! Today, are you here for lodging? Or are you only here to eat?”

“Lodging. Although I’ve seen in the guidebook, is this place as good as described?”

The girl nodded when Hajime showed auntie’s special map.

“Aa, it’s the introduction from Catherine-san. Yes, it was as written. How many nights do you wish to stay?”

Although the girl tried to promptly continue the staying procedure, Hajime was thinking of something else. Hajime was shocked that the auntie’s name was Catherine. The girl called out to him with, “Umm～ mr. costumer?”

“Ah, aa, sorry. Only for one night. The one with meals and bath.”

“Yes. The bath will be 100 ruta per 15 minutes. Currently, it’s empty at this time”

The girl showed him the time table. Because he wanted to enjoy it, he wanted to book the men’s and women’s side for two hours. When he said that, “Eh, for two hours!?”, the girl was surprised just like that. It couldn’t be helped, Hajime was Japanese after all.

“Then, um～, what about the rooms? Although there are double and triple rooms…”

The girl looked at Hajime and his party with curiosity. She was in her puberty after all. However, Hajime could feel the other customers who were eating their meals perk their ears up. Although he knew Yue and Shia were beautiful, it looked like they stood out more than he expected. Because there are lots of people they don't know here, Hajime was slightly paralyzed.

"Aa, the triple room please."

Hajime said that without any hesitation. Their surroundings became noisy, and the girls' cheeks were blushing in slight red. However, there was a person who objected Hajime's words.

"… … It's no good. Two double rooms"

It was Yue. The surrounding customers, especially the males looking toward Hajime with expressions that said, "Serves you right!". They interpreted Yue's words as to divide them between men and women. However, Yue's next words put them in despair.

"… … One for me and Hajime. Shia in the other room."

"Wa-, what's with that! I don't want to be left out! The triple room is better, you know!"

To the fiercely protesting Shia, Yue only said one thing.

“… … It’ll be distracting if Shia was there”

“Distracting… … what do you mean”

“… … What is… … What?”

“Bu!? Wa-, don’t say that in this place! That’s vulgar!”

Having heard Yue’s words, the men who fell into despair begin to turn their eyes filled with flames of envy toward Hajime. The inn’s girl, with a reddened face looked alternatively between Hajime and Yue. Hajime who thought it’d make him ashamed if this keeps up, tried to stop it but his plan was a little too slow.

“Th-then, Yue-san please stay in the other room! Hajime-san and I will stay in the same room!”

“… … Hou, then?”

Yue’s cold and piercing gaze turned toward Shia who pointed her finger. Because of its power, Shia who remembered her training days trembled, “Eei, woman’s courage”, said that, then returned to the gaze while loudly declaring.

“Th-then, I’ll give my virginity to Hajime-san!”

Silence came. No one, not even one word was said, not even noise was heard. Now, everyone in the inn were focused on Hajime and his party, and stared at them. From the kitchen, the girl's parent were, "Ara ara, maa maa" and "Youth is good", said something along those lines.

Yue was swaying with eyes of absolute zero.

"… … Today is your death anniversary"

"Uh, I, I won't lose! I will defeat Yue-san and become the main heroine from now on!"

"… … I'll show you, no disciples were stronger than their master."

"I'll usurp it!"

An abnormal pressure gushed out from Yue, and Shia who was trembling shouldered her Sledgehammer. It was truly pandemonium, everyone was nervous and gulped in this critical atmosphere.

Then…

GOCHINn! GOCHINn!

“Hiu!?”

“Hakyu!?”

The sound of fists hitting the girls came followed by their screams. Yue and Shia, with teary eyes, crouched while covering their heads with both hands. The one who hit the two’s heads were of course Hajime.

“Geez, you’re troubling everyone, and above all it shamed me.”

“… … Uu, Hajime’s love is painful…”

“J-just a little more, just a little more time then… … with body strengthening the pain would be…”

“You reap what you sow, idiot-”

Hajime turned his cold gaze toward the two, then returned to face the girl. The girl corrected her posture when Hajime looked at her.

“I am sorry for the commotion. Triple room, please”

“… … Tr-triple room with this situation… … i-in other words, three person? A-amazing… … hah, don’t tell me booking the bath

for two hours is also for that!? Washing each others' body! Then… … d-doing this and that… … how abnormal!"

The girl's mind had gone for a trip. The landlady who couldn't stand it any longer dragged the girl into the interior. The man who seemed to be her parent continued to finish the procedure. When he gave the key he apologized, "I am sorry about my girl", and in his eyes were, "You're a man after all, right? I know how you feel", that kind of unwelcomed misunderstanding. Surely, he was the type that would say, "Did you enjoy the night?", when tomorrow arrived.

Because no matter what he says it would be misunderstood, along with the other customers who blankly sent skeptical gazes, with Yue and Shia who were still crouched on the floor shoulder to shoulder, Hajime ran away straight to the third floor where his room was located. After a while, the stopped time moved and it became noisy again downstairs, and Hajime who felt strangely tired decided to ignore that. When Yue and Shia entered the room, they moved their bed, while Hajime who had dived into the bed already shut down his consciousness.

After sleeping for several hours, Hajime was woken up by Yue when it was time for supper, then the three went down to the dining room. Somehow, the customers who were there when they checked in were still there.

For a moment, Hajime felt his cheeks twitch, then he assumed his calm and sat down on the seat. Immediately, the inn girl from before came as the waitress and said with a reddened face, "I am sorry for before" Although she apologized, she couldn't hide the curiosity in her eyes. The food he ordered was delicious and it was the normal food he finally got to eat after a long time, so he

wanted to slowly eat it, but he couldn't help but to secretly sigh.

Inside the bath, although the time for male and female were different, Yue and Shia trespassed, then once again pandemonium was raised only to be punished by Hajime with hits on the head, and the silhouette of the inn girl could be seen moving around sneakily, when it was found out she was peeping by the landlady, she got spanked on the butt…

Even at the time for sleep, Yue and Shia naturally came into Hajime's bed, while his right arm was clung to, Shia who clung on to his left arm cried because of the coldness of the artificial arm. He could feel Shia through the pseudo-nerves, especially the direct feeling of that lethal weapon, and it disturbed his mind. When that was discovered, Yue stared closely at him with dead-like eyes, it continued for all night long…

The next morning, Hajime vowed. Next time he would just order a double room for Yue and him without anymore questioning. It didn't matter if Shia sulked because of it. After all, Yue's silence was not very good for his mental health.

After eating breakfast, Hajime handed some money to Yue and Shia, to ask them to help buy the necessary items for travel. There's some time until the time for checking out came. So, while Yue and Shia does the errand, he'll finish his tasks inside the room.

"What tasks?"

Shia honestly questioned him. However, Hajime was,

“There is something I wanted to make. Because it was already planned, I am sure it only needs a few hours to finish. Although I seriously thought to finish it last night… … somehow I was strangely feeling tired yesterday”

“… … Th-that’s so. Yue-san. I-is it okay for me to look for clothes?”

“… … Nn, no problem. I wanted to look around the stalls”

“Ah, that’s good! Yesterday we only saw it for a moment, after we’re done shopping let’s go eat”

While averting their gazes, Yue and Shia began to noisily talk about shopping. Although they knew they were the cause, they didn’t want to admit it, so they changed the topic calmly.

“… … You guys, in truth you’re getting along well.”

Hajime’s mutters only go through their ears.

Arifureta: Volume 5 Chapter 2

In Brook Town III

Currently, Yue and Shia had gone out to town. Because it was only several hours before noon, they must move as planned. Their objectives were food(groceries) and clothes for Shia, as well as some medicine. Weapons and armor were unnecessary because they have Hajime.

The town was already wrapped up in it's day to day hustle and bustle. The stall keepers vigorously called out to customers, there are housewives and adventurers haggling intensively. There are also food stalls that made you think, 'Isn't it too crowded in the morning?', while the smell of burning meat and sauce drifted around.

Because tool shops and groceries would be too crowded at this time, these two decided to look for Shia's clothes first.

From auntie; Catherine-san's map, it mentioned the stores for everyday wear, specialty stores for high-class dresses, and the recommended stores for adventurers and travelers. As expected, au… … Catherine-san was someone with good abilities. She could accomplish anything as long as she wished for it.

These two immediately visited a certain shop for adventurers. They decided to buy everyday clothes for when they went back.

Inside the shop, as expected of something Catherine-san recommended, there were a lot of items. The quality was good, they were practical and functional, it was a store that wouldn't betray your expectations.

However, inside was…

"Oh my~, welcome ? What lovely girls. To have you coming here, it makes onee-san happy~, I will sure~ly give a go~od service ? "

There was a monster. With a height of 2 meters, cladded with armor made of muscles, face thick with make-up, on top of its bald head, 'chokon', long hair grew in only one place, and that was made into a three-knit braid and tied with a pink ribbon. When it moved, its muscles were twitching and 'gishimishi' sound could be heard from it, with both hands on its cheeks, it twisted its body. Its clothes were… … no, it couldn't be said as that. At the very least, 'gon' thick limbs, with a garment that made its stomach muscles completely visible.

Yue and Shia stiffened. Shia already passed out, while Yue steeled herself, having seen a monster that surpassed the Abyss' demonic beasts.

"My oh my~? What happened to the two of you? Cute girls shou~ldn't make that face. Come on, smile smile?"

"No matter what, everything was your fault, it was your fault that I

couldn't smile!" The grand rebuttal that Yue and Shia were somehow able to resist making. Even though these two have the level of highest potential out of all of humanity, they didn't think they could win against this monster.

However, because the monster approached them with a big smile, Yue could not to bear it and inadvertently muttered.

"… … Human?"

At that moment, the monster raised an angered voice.

"Who~ could make a legendary class demonic beast run away? As you can see, credibility behind that is zero, or rather it's minus. How could you call me a monster!!"

"I-I am sorry…"

Yue trembled with teary eyes. Shia, had long since… … been chilled in her lower body. After Yue apologized, the monster smiled(?) once again and continued its service.

"It's o~kay. Then? For today, what kind of item do you want to bu~y?"

Shia stayed still even now, while Yue steeled herself to look for Shia's clothes. Maybe it was because she already wanted to go

home, Shia gripped Yue's skirt and shook both the skirt and her head. However when, smilingly, the monster said, "Leave it to me~", it carried Shia on its shoulder into the store. At that time, Yue looking at Shia's eyes the expression of saw a pig that got sold for meat.

In conclusion, the monster that was called manager Crystabel-san could be considered a splendid manager. Shia who was taken inside the store also realized it, that's why when it offered her the dressing room, she was undeniably grateful.

Yue and Shia expressed their gratitude to manager Crystabel. When they did that, they could feel the charm from the manager's smile, it was a woman's(?) virtue.

"Well~, at first I wondered what might happened to me, but it was an unexpectedly good person. That manager-san"

"Nn… … we can't judge people from their appearances"

"Right~"

While chatting that way, they wandered around as their destination was the tool shop. However, these two stood out. On their way, when they noticed it, they were already surrounded by ten men. Most of them looked like adventurers, but among them there was also someone with an apron from the shop from somewhere.

One of the men came forward. Although Yue didn't remember it, this man was one of the adventurers inside the guild when Hajime and his party talked to Catherine.

"Your names are Yue-chan and Shia-chan, right?"

"? … … that's right"

Yue who didn't know what he wanted squinted her eyes. Shia, because she was a demi-human, was surprised to be called by "chan".

The man who heard Yue answer, looked back at the other men behind him and nodded, Yue could see they steeled their minds. The other men also moved forward to the front of Yue or Shia.

Then…

"""""""""" Yue-chan, please go out with me!!""""""""""

"""""""""" Shia-chan! Become my slave!!""""""""""

In other words, well, something like that. The pick-up lines for Yue and Shia were different because Shia was a demi-human. Even though they needed the master's permission to transfer the rights of a slave, they must already know how intimate the relationship between Hajime and his party was from their talk at the inn

yesterday. So to persuade Hajime they must get Shia first… … or so they thought.

By the way, maybe because the impact from the talk at the inn was too strong, they fact that the slave pact made it so that the slave was unable to oppose its master, somehow escaped their minds. If not so, they should have discovered that Shia wasn't a slave. Although the strength of the pact could be lowered, no one actually did that.

Well, Yue and Shia who got confessed to were…

"… … Shia, the tool shop is over here"

"Ah, yes. It's good if we can buy everything at once"

They continued their walk as if nothing had happened.

"Wa-, please wait! Your answer!? Tell us your ans- ""I refuse"" … … guu…"

Because their attitude seemed to think nothing about it, the man let out a groan, some men bent their knees and crumbled on the spot (orz). However, there were also some that didn't give up. That just goes to show how far above normal Yue and Shia's level of beauty was. As a result, it couldn't be helped if they became reckless because of it.

“Then, I’ll make you mine by force!”

The reckless man shouted that, then ‘ginn’ light came from the other men’s eyes. They surrounded the two so they could catch them, then impatiently drew near them.

Finally, the man who talked to them first, jumped out to catch Yue. When the Japanese see that they’d surely shout, “Ah, Lupi* Dive”, something like that.

Yue coldly muttered one thing.

“”Ice Coffin””

Immediately, the man was confined inside a coffin of ice except his head, pulled by gravity and fell. “Gupe!?”, was the miserable scream the man who did the Lu**n Dive raised when he reached the ground.

The other men knew that Ice Coffin was classified as advanced water system magic and were shocked that Yue invoked it just by saying its name. They interpreted it on their own and in their whispers, “She said the incantation beforehand” and “The magic circle must be hidden inside her clothes”, or something along those lines could be heard.

Yue was, walking up determined to the man who was wrapped in ice. Although surrounding them was a shocked air, having seen Yue's prowess, there was already the second **pin!, among them. That's why, Yue showed them a warning.

Yue melted the ice that wrapped the man little by little. The man was glad because he might get out of it. In addition, he watched Yue with feverish eyes.

"Y-Yue-chan. I am sorry to do it suddenly! But, I truly think of you as…"

Even though the man wrapped in ice tried to get his feelings across, his words stopped. If you ask why, it was because he noticed the small place where the ice melted. It was…

"U-umm, Yue-chan? Why, umm, why… … is it only the part between my groin?"

That's right, Yue only melted the ice between the man's groin. The man was still perfectly restrained. Because he felt something bad would happen, the man with cold sweat said, "Surely, that can't be, right? Right? Right?", when he saw Yue's expression.

Yue curved her mouth slightly to the man.

"… … Aim and shoot"

Then, volleys of gravel continuously hit the man's nether region.

—— Agh ——!!

—— Stop already-

—— moth~er!

The man's scream resounded in the morning street. The sound of Mao collecting coins could be heard (To refresh your memory of the sound, please imagine the old **rio) from the man's groin that was continuously aimed at. Surely the inside was like something that received a boxer's Demey Roll.

The surrounding men, not only the one that surrounded them, but also the unrelated onlookers, and stall keepers nearby, all crumbled while covering their groin with both hands.

The barrage that seemed to continue for eternity, finally stopped in consideration of the man who already lost his consciousness. Even though it was impossible to lose consciousness with only one blow, it could be done by accumulated damage along with wind magic. As if it was a miracle, Yue who 'fuu' blew her forefinger, left her words as a parting gift.

"… … Good, you've become a otomen « Maiden »"

On this day, a man died, and became the second Crystabel, and Mariabel-chan was born. This person, under training from manager Crystabel, became the manager of the branch store, and although it was able to increase its fame… … that's a story for another time.

Yue got her second name, "Crotch Smasher", that name caused uproars in the adventurer guild and even reached the capital, it was capable of making male adventurers shudder, but this was also a story for another time.

Yue and Shia ignored the frightened gazes of men and continued their shopping. On their way, they could hear girls say, "Yue-oneesama…", but ignored that and continued their shopping.

* * *

When Yue and Shia went back to the inn, Hajime already finished his work.

"Good work, somehow, there seems to be a fuss inside town, did something happen?"

It seemed he noticed their commotion.

"… … There is no problem."

“A~, un, that’s right. There’s no problem at all.”

To see a monster as the dress store manager, and had heaven call for a man, the two said it was nothing. Although Hajime felt a little suspicious of them, he shrugged his shoulders and let it go.

“Did you buy all the necessary things?”

“… … Nn, don’t worry.”

“That’s right. There’s also a lot of food, but it was okay. It truly is convenient to have Treasure Box.”

For shopping, Hajime entrusted the “Treasure Box” to them. Having seen Shia look at the ring enviously, Hajime could only reveal a wry smile. With his current proficiency, he was still unable to make “Treasure Box”. It surely would be convenient, when he is capable of crafting it, he would definitely give it to them.

“Well then, Shia. This is yours”

While saying that, Hajime passed Shia a cylindrical object with 40 cm in diameter and 50 cm in length. A silver cylindrical object with a handle installed on its side.

Shia who received the gift from Hajime, was immediately confused when she felt the weight and activated her body strengthening.

“Wh-what is this? It’s really heavy…”

“Well, it’s because that’s your new Sledgehammer. It is good for it to be heavy”

“Heh, this… … is?”

Shia’s doubt was justifiable. The cylindrical object did not look like a hammer at all, and the handle was also too short. No matter what was said, it was unbalanced.

“Aa, that’s the standby state. For now, try to pour some magic into it”

“Umm, like this? kh!?”

As he said, she poured magic into the hammer-like thing, ‘kashun! kasun!’, sounds of machinery emitted from the hammer and the handle extended, it became the right length for a swing mallet.This Sledgehammer was an artifact : Doryukken (named by Hajime). It was equipped with some gimmicks that could be used by Shia. It operates by transforming the parts of the weapon that have magic poured into.

What Hajime wanted to finish was this weapon. When Yue and Shia went shopping in the morning, he was making Shia’s new

weapon.

“This is the limit of the current me, I’ll revise it again when my ability improves, because we don’t know what will happen from now on. Although you received Yue’s training, it was only for ten days. It’s still dangerous for you. That’s why that weapon was made while thinking of how to make use of your power to the maximum. Please master it, okay? Because you have become our companion, don’t die without my permission, understand?”

“Hajime-san… … fufu, your speech is all over the place~. It’s okay. Although I am still not strong enough, I’ll follow you anywhere!”

Shia was so happy while embracing Doryukken. Because she was so happy, Yue who felt a little ill-humored by it, thought to herself that it couldn’t be helped, and shrugged her shoulders. Hajime only showed a wry smile. Although he didn’t say it, to witnessed a scene where a beautiful girl was happy because she got a Sledgehammer as a present, he felt it was surreal.

With the joyous Shia in their company, they finished checking out from the inn. Even now, they ignored the inn girl who looked at them with blushing cheeks.

When they got outside, the sun was already at its zenith, and its brilliant shine fell on and warmed them. With his arms spread, Hajime took a deep breath. When he turned around, Hajime could see Yue and Shia were also smiling.

Hajime nodded to the two, and started to advance, followed by Yue

and Shia.

It was time to travel again.

Arifureta: Volume 5 Chapter 3

Great Dungeon of Raisen?

A heap of corpses.

Those words fit the current spectacle inside the Raisen Grand Canyon's ravine. Some demonic beasts had their heads smashed, along with the ground. While some demonic beasts had theirs pulverized, furthermore some demonic beasts had their body carbonized, although there were various killing methods, all of them died in one attack.

Naturally, inside this hell, the place that was feared as an execution ground by people, there were…

"One hit certain kill~!"

ZUGANn!!

"… … Hindrance"

GOBANn!!

“Shut up”

DOPANn!!

It was the trio of Hajime, Yue, and Shia. After Hajime and his party got out from the town of Brook (with Yue and Shia’s fans seeing them off), using the magic-driven two-wheeler, they passed through the entrance of “Raisen Grand Canyon”. Currently, after advancing further and camping along the way, they had already passed through the cave concealing the path to “Orcus Great Dungeon”, furthermore two days had passed since then.

Inside “Raisen Grand Canyon”, the demonic beasts kept attacking them just as usual.

Shia’s Sledgehammer, swung with immense force smashed demonic beasts, it was literally a one hit certain kill. The demonic beasts were crushed to death with a normal attack that far exceed their defense. Even the mochi pounding moon rabbit’s destructive power paled in comparison to this.

Yue closed in on the demonic beasts, then slaughtered them with magic that she instantly invoked with magical power from her equipment. Although Yue herself has enormous magical power, equipped with magical power stored inside the accessories called magic crystallization stone series, it became even more enormous. Her attack could be compared to endless bombing. Even if magical power was disintegrated in the ravine, thus the time to invoke magic became longer and the distance became shorter, she invoked ultra high temperature flames in no time and demonic beasts were killed while being carbonized without exception.

Hajime, needless to say, was sniping the heads with Donner while driving the magic-driven two-wheeler. Although it was consuming his magic to use “Lightning-clad” and driving the magic-driven two-wheeler at the same time, there is no sign of magic depletion.

The hell beasts that dominate the ravine were completely treated as small fish. The annihilation was treated as a side job while they searched for a sign of the Great Dungeon. The demonic beasts’ corpses overflowed on their way.

“Haa~, even though it should be somewhere inside the Raisen, it was too vast after all”

They moved while examining if there were caves. Even though they made thorough observations, not even one was found. Hajime could only inadvertently complain.

“Well, because no matter what happens we’ll reach the Big Volcanic Mountain, it’s okay to not find it at all. There might be some clues in the Big Volcanic Mountain after all”

“Well, even if that’s so…”

“Nn… … but, those demonic beasts made it gloomy”

“A~, Yue-san also dislikes this place~”

While complaining and being disgusted by the demonic beasts that keep coming, they had kept traveling for three days. There are no results today and the dark had already set in. The beautiful shine of the crescent moon could be seen if you looked up, therefore Hajime and his party started to prepare their camp. After taking out the tent, they prepared dinner with ingredients and seasoning bought in the town. The tent and cooking utensils were artifacts Hajime made.

The tent was created using Creation magic, with “heating stone” and “cooling stone” installed, it’s always kept at a comfortable temperature. It’s also equipped with “refrigerator” and “freezer” made with cooling stone. Furthermore, the metal frame was imbued with “sign interception” from the “mind-severing stone” so that it wouldn’t be found easily by enemies.

For cooking utensils, there was a frying pan and kettle with an adjustable flame that was proportionate with the amount of magic used, and a kitchen knife endowed with “wind claw” in its sharp edge that could be activated by pouring in magic. There was also a steam cleaner-like thing. They were Hajime’s beloved children that help provide the meals on their travel. Moreover, because it could only be used using direct magic manipulation, it could be said that there was a crime prevention system.

“Age of gods magic is truly a convenient one”

Those were the words that Hajime said when he made the cooking utensil artifacts and the tent installed with a heating and cooling system. It’s just like a useless technology, that wasn’t that useless, that he uselessly refined.

By the way, today's dinner was kururu chicken simmered in tomato. Kururu chicken was a chicken that was capable of flying in the sky. Its meat's quality and taste was just like chicken, a popular type of chicken meat of this world. It was a dish where the meat was cut into bite size pieces and floured. after that it was sautéd, then boiled along with various vegetables in a tomato soup. It has the right flavor of butter and meat juice inside the meat, you could feel the tomato's sourness permeate in your nose when you smell it, when you put it into your mouth, the flavors will spread through. The meat will 'horohoro', crumble inside your mouth, 'hokuhoku' the potato(fake) that's completely soaked inside the tomato soup, while carrot(fake)'s and onion(fake)'s sweetness transmitted to your tongue. To have bread melt and soften after dipping it inside the delicious soup truly made it more delicious.

Dinner was finished with full satisfaction. and while immersed in the lingering taste, Hajime and his party chatted just like they always do. Inside the tent, they could leisurely chat because the mind-severing stone was activate, which made it so that demonic beasts do not approach them. Although sometimes there were demonic beasts that came near, Hajime only needed to stick his hand out the window that installed, and shoot it. Moreover, when time for sleep, the three rotated the lookout duty until morning came.

Today, it was about time for Yue and Shia to start preparing to sleep. The first on look out was Hajime. Because there were fluffy futons inside the tent, they could sleep comfortably despite it being a camp. Also, Shia went outside the tent before getting into the futon.

To Hajime who was dubious of what happened, Shia said with a calm face.

“For a while, I wanted to pick flowers”

“There are no flowers inside the ravine, you know?”

“Ha-ji-me-sa～n!”

Hajime’s words that lacked delicacy destroyed Shia’s calm face, she angrily stared at him. Hajime who obviously knew what those words meant said, “My bad my bad”, with a wryly smiling face that didn’t show any remorse. Shia hurriedly went to the tent’s side in anger, after a while…

“Ha-Hajime-sa～n! Yue-sa～n! It’s an emergency! Please come he～re!”

Was what Shia shouted out, forgetting the possibility of demonic beasts hearing it. Wondering what happened, Hajime and Yue, who came from the tent, looked at each other then dashed out at the same time.

When they arrived at the origin of Shia’s voice, they saw that there was a huge monolith that leaned on the ravine’s wall after it fell, and a space was revealed between the monolith and the wall. Shia was inside that space seeing something unbelievable! Being colored in excitement all the while.

“Here, over here! I found it!”

“I understand, for the time being get out of there. It looks like you used full body strengthening. Aren’t you too excited?”

“… … annoying”

The frolicking Shia was pulled out by Hajime and Yue’s hands, when Hajime pulled her he got a feel, while Yue gloomily frowned because of that. Guided by Shia into the crevice between the rocks, when they entered the wall’s side had a hollow interior, and it was wider than expected. Having entered that space, Shia silently, with a proud expression ‘bishi’, pointed her finger at the wall.

Hajime and Yue looked at the place pointed by that finger, then they inadvertently let out “Ha?”, while blinking their eyes in surprise.

In front of the two, in that place, there was a splendid rectangular signboard that was made with cuts in the wall, and strangely woman-like characters were carved there.

“Please come in! Into Miledi Raisen’s thrilling Great Dungeon?”

The mark “!” and “?” felt strangely irritating.

“… … the heck is this”

“… … what is this”

Hajime and Yue’s voice came out in succession. “I am seeing something unbelievable right now!”, were the exact presentations of their expressions. The two of them, blankly looked at the signboard inside the hellish ravine.

“To ask what, it is the entrance! Great Dungeon’s! It was found by chance when I went to-… …cough, to pick flowers. Well~, it was real, there is a Great Dungeon inside Raisen Grand Canyon”

While Shia’s slaphappy voice resounded, maybe because Hajime and Yue was finally able to get out of their surprise, they wore indescribable expressions, then looked at each other in perplexion.

“… … Yue. Do you think it’s real?”

“… … … … … … … … … … … Nn”

“That’s a long pause there. Your basis?”

“… … Miledi(…)”

“It was that after all…”

“Miledi”, it was the first name of Raisen that appeared on Oscar’s memorandum. Although the name Raisen was conveyed and known by the world, the first name was unknown. Therefore, the chance that a place with its name signed in was the Great Dungeon of Raisen is very high.

But, no matter what, what they were honestly unable to believe was…

“Why must it be this character…”

There was a reason for saying that. Hajime was considering the desperate fights that happened inside the Orcus Great Dungeon, and surely the other dungeons would also be along that line, that’s why the light-heartedness of this made him lose his strength. Yue also understood well the severity of a Great Dungeon, that’s why, her expression said that she still thought maybe it was someone’s prank.

“But, the entrance-like place couldn’t be seen, right? The interior was a dead end…”

Not noticing what happened in Hajime and Yue’s minds, Shia thought, I wonder where the entrance is? And was looking around the surrounding, then she ‘peshipeshi’, hit the hollow part of the wall.

“Oi, Shia. Don’t…”

GAKONn!

“Fukya!?”

“Don’t carelessly move around,” were the words Hajime was unable to finish when part of the wall that Shia touched ‘GURUNn’, suddenly rotated, and Shia disappeared to the other side of the wall. It was like a door mechanism inside a ninja’s house.

“”… …””

The credibility of that signboard miraculously increased with the finding of the entrance of the Great Dungeon. The Great Dungeon of Raisen was here after all. Even though they had a mountain of complaints such as, “Is this really okay for a Great Dungeon?” and “Give me my seriousness from Orcus back”, something like that after seeing that amusement-like invitation. Hajime and Yue who saw Shia silently disappear behind the rotating door, once more, looked at each other then let out sighs, and put their hands onto the rotating door just like Shia.

Having activated the door, Hajime and Yue were sent to the other side just like Shia. The inside was pitch black, and the door was ‘gururi’, rotated back to its former position. And, at that time,

Hyu Hyu Hyu!

Sounds of something coming flying at them resounded, while they couldn't see anything inside the darkness. Hajime immediately used "Night Vision" and discovered what they were. They were arrows. Countless arrows painted jet black so as to not reflect light, and they came flying to remove any intruders that entered.

Hajime, with Donner in his right hand, used his left hand to beat down those flying jet black arrows. 'Kan Kan Kan', the sound of metal knocking metal came out, without missing even one arrow.

When counted, there were 20 arrows. Jet black arrows made of metal and didn't reflect any light scattered on the ground, when the last arrow was knocked down, silence returned.

At the same time, the surrounding walls began to shine. The area Hajime and his party were in was a room with a length of 10 meters in every direction, and straight ahead, a passage into the interior appeared. In addition, there was a lithograph inside the room with words with the same characters as the signboard carved on it.

"Did you get scared? Hey, did this scare you? Then you're a kid, Niya Niya"

"Or, were you injured? Or did someone die? … … bufu—"

"" … …""

Hajime and Yue couldn't think of anything but one thing. That was "How annoying~". Also, the "Niya Niya" and "bufu-" part that were carved with emphasis as if to provoke them, made them even more irritated. Especially, if someone in their party truly died, then surely the survivor would curse the heaven.

Hajime and Yue were so irritated that many veins popped out on their heads. Then, suddenly, Yue muttered something she just remembered.

"… … Shia?"

"Ah."

Having heard Yue's mutter, Hajime finally remembered, then looked back at the rotating door in panic. Because the door only did one rotation at a time, for her to not be here means the possibility that she got out at the same time Hajime and Yue entered were high. It made him feel something unpleasant because even though a lot of time had passed she didn't enter, so Hajime immediately activated the rotating door.

Shia was… … there as expected. Her form sewn on the rotating door.

"Uu, sob, Hajime-san… … please don't look~, but, I want you to take these out. Hic, please do it without looking at me~"

It truly was a pitiful appearance. Shia, although unable to see the arrows that came flying, she probably used her natural search ability to somehow manage to dodge them from the sound. However it seemed it was truly last second, with her clothes pierced here and there, she made a pictogram similar to those that were drawn on emergency exits. Her rabbit ears bent into something similar to a lightning bolt to avoid the arrows, because she knew that she had done something impossible, her body still twitched even now. Most of all, Shia didn't cry out of fear of death. The cause was… … her feet were magnificently wet.

"Now that I remember, you are going to pick some flowers… … well, what to say. You only did the necessary…"

"Wrong! Uu~, just why didn't you finish that, the past me~!!"

It was an appearance that you'd never want to show as a woman, even more so for Shia who cried because she had shown it to the man she fell for. Her rabbit ears completely hung down. First of all, even if it was a chance to encounter love after 100 years, Hajime thought it was already too late. That's why, without looking away he stared at her in amazement. And, that hollowed Shia's heart even more.

"… … Don't move"

Maybe because she was also a woman, Yue's expressionlessness contained sympathy and she released Shia from the crucifixion.

"… … I'll do something about it. You're still a novice"

“I am ashamed~. Sob”

“… … Hajime, change of clothes”

“Here”

Shia’s change of clothes were pulled out from the “Treasure Box”, then she did a quick change while blushing.

Finally, Shia’s preparations are finished, “It’s time to conquer the Dungeon!”, was the enthusiastic shout that she let out, only to notice the lithograph.

She looked down and her hair concealed her expression. Shia was silent for a while, then she slowly took out Doryukken, and struck the lithograph with all of her might. ‘Gogya’, was the sound that resounded accompanied with the destruction of the lithograph.

Maybe because she was unable to endure it anymore, she magnificently swung Doryukken many many times as if attacking the enemy of her parents.

Then, in the place of the broken lithograph, characters were carved on the ground, it said…

“Sorr~y? This lithograph will automatically be repaired after some time~ Pu-kusukusu!!”

“Mukii— —!!”

Shia was truly enraged and started to swing Doryukken more intensely. The small room was shaken as if a small earthquake happened, the sound of extraordinary impacts were resounding many times.

Watching Shia with a skeptical gaze, Hajime frankly muttered.

“Miledi Raisen, rather than a member of the “Liberators,” she is unquestionably the enemy of humanity”

“… … I absolutely agree on that”

Apparently, the Great Dungeon of Raisen would be a difficult place in a different way than the Orcus Great Dungeon.

Arifureta: Volume 5 Chapter 4

Miledi Raisen I

Raisen's Great Dungeon was a lot more troublesome than they expected.

First, magic couldn't be used at all. It was because the strength of magic disintegration was far stronger than inside the ravine. For Yue who specialized in magic, this place puts a heavy burden on her. She was unable to use high-ranked magic and her magic's range of the magic she could use were shortened to their limits here. The farthest she could use them was only five meters. Somehow, the current level of magic she used was enough for combat. However, right now she was incapable of using magic strong enough to deliver a one-hit kill.

In addition, although the amount of magic stored inside the magic crystallization series didn't decrease much, it couldn't be used. The consumption rate was too severe after all. Yue was only able to use middle-ranked magic because she was a genius, most people would be unable to do anything.

Even Hajime was greatly affected by it. Special magic that worked by emitting magic outside of the body such as "Aerodynamic" and "Wind Claw" couldn't be used, Even the output of "Lightning Clad" is greatly decreased. Donner-Schlag's power also fell below half of the usual, while Schlagen's maximum power was at the usual level of Donner-Schlag.

Therefore, body strengthening became the most important magic in this Great Dungeon. In Hajime's party, Shia had become the main star in this stage.

So, the reliable rabbit ears of Hajime's party…

"I'll do it, you know… …absolutely, when I reach the dwelling I'll mess it up so much it'll be as if a storm had gone through"

With Doryukken on her shoulder, she examined her surroundings as if she was trying to find her prey. Her anger was obvious. It was a deep deep anger. Even her words' intonation had become strange. The cause was, you could imagine it came from Miledi Raisen's mischievousness.

Because they understood Shia's feelings well, Hajime and Yue couldn't say anything about it. It was because if there was someone who was seriously agitated, by her side there would be someone calm in reverse of her. It was the current psychological state of Hajime and Yue. Currently, while Hajime and his party continued their advance, they had encountered various traps and annoying carved words. That's why, with Shia who was truly enraged by it, Hajime and Yue also felt irritated.

Finally, "Fuhihi", strange laughter came from Shia's side, and Hajime recalled the extremely malicious things they encountered to get here.

* * *

After Shia destroyed the annoying lithograph, Hajime and his party continued their advance into the passage, and came into a certain vast space.

Inside, there were staircases and passages, the passageway that continued from the entrance was a mess without any regularity, it was as if this place was made by casually combining lego blocks. The staircase from the first floor was connected to a passage on the third floor, and the passage on the third floor gradually became a slope that connected to the first floor's passageway. While the staircase that was erected on the second floor was connected to nothing but wall, it was truly a mess.

"Once again, in a way it was truly a dungeon-like place."

"… … Nn, it is confusing."

"Fun, as expected of a dungeon made by a rotten person. This mess is an expression of her mind's contents."

"… … because we understand what you feel, it's about time for you to calm down."

Shia was enraged even now. Hajime, half-sympathized and half-amazed, said, "Well then, how should we advance now", while thinking about it.

“… … Hajime. Even if you think about it, there’s no other method.”

“Nn~, well, you’re right. For now, let’s advance while marking and mapping the way.”

“Nn…”

Hajime nodded at Yue’s words. Mapping was the basic thing for exploring a dungeon. However, Hajime unconsciously frowned when he thought how troublesome it’d be to accurately map out a complex dungeon like this.

Also, what Hajime meant by “marking” was using a special magic called “Tracking.” This special magic operated by leaving a “mark” made of magical power on the places that he touched. When the “mark” was used on living things, Hajime was able to track where they moved. In case of this place, Hajime put his “mark” on the wall. Because the “mark” could be made visible, Yue and Shia were able to understand it. Maybe because the magic power was applied directly, the disintegration didn’t seem to take effect.

Hajime immediately put a “mark” on side of the passageway on the nearest place to the entrance and continued to advance.

The passageway was two meters wide, and made from countless blocks that looked like bricks. Because the walls emitted a faint light, there was no problem with their vision. Maybe it was made of a different material from the green-light stone because it gave off bluish lights.

When Hajime tried to see it using “Mineral Appraisal,” he found that it was called “phosphorous ore.” Apparently it gave off light when it came in contact air. The first room didn’t give off light probably because it was the first room. The image that came out of the cave was lapu** where the levit

*** stone appeared. There was an old man’s voice that came out of the stone. After all, the phosphorous ore would keep radiating light as long as it was in contact with air.

It was the masterpiece anime of Japan that Hajime unintentionally thought of while advancing in the long passageway. Suddenly,

GAKONn

The sound came out of one of the blocks that Hajime stepped on. That block sunk into the floor due to Hajime’s weight. Hajime and his party instinctively let out, “Eh?”, and looked at their feet.

At that moment,

Shaaaaa!!

The sound of gliding blades resounded, and in the space between blocks on the wall, giant saw-toothed blades come out rotated in high speed while vibrating. The blades approached them with

height of the neck from the right, the one from the left wall at the height of the waist.

“Evade it!”

Hajime immediately shouted, and evaded it by leaning his back just like the protagonist from the matr**, while the two behind him also tried to evade. Yue was small in the first place so she only needed to squat down to evade. Shia also seemed to be able to evade it. From his back, “Hawawa, hawawawa”, a shaken voice could be heard. Because there was no pain in her voice, Hajime guessed she must be unharmed. Although it was truly at a hair’s breadth that the tip of the fur of her rabbit ear was cut… … it was not a problem at all.

The two blades that were filled with murderous intent and malice were unable do anything to Hajime and his party, and disappeared into the walls. Being vigilant of a possible second wave, for a while Hajime watched his surroundings carefully. However, apparently that was the end. Having felt relieved, Hajime let out a sigh then looked at his back only to feel a chill.

He dashed out instinctively, to retreat and using the momentum recovered Yue and Shia. Immediately, countless blades fell onto the place where Hajime and his party were in just like a guillotine, and cut the ground as if it was made of butter. As expected, it was rotating in high speed and vibrating just like the blades from before.

Hajime looked at the blades that dropped just a few centimeters ahead with cold sweat. Yue and Shia also stiffened because of it.

“… … it was a completely physical trap. I couldn’t sense it with my Magic Eye.”

Until now, Hajime was able to avoid traps perfectly because they were magic traps. Of all the traps in the Great Dungeon that he had seen, all of them contained magic. That’s why, if it was a magic trap, Hajime’s Magic Eye was able to see through it. Therefore, he had the preconception that it was okay as long as the Magic Eye didn’t react to something. In short, he overestimated his power.

“Hau~, I-I thought I was dead~. Rather, Hajime-san! Please stop it if it was just that much! Isn’t that why you have the artificial arm?!”

“Well, don’t you think those blades were sharp? Even if it won’t be able to cut it, there might be scratches. After all, I can’t use Vajra now.”

“S-scratches… … between equipment and me, which is more important!?”

“… … well, you’re safe after all. Isn’t that good.”

“Wa-, what’s with that topic evasion! That was a lie, right? I am the one that’s more important, right? Right?”

Shia tried to ask Hajime, who played her for a fool, and Yue added verbal abuse to the current Shia.

“… …Leaking rabbit. You’re dying because of your own inexperience.”

“Le-leaking, please take that back, Yue-san! No matter what, that was a disgrace for me!”

A new disgraceful title added to Shia’s ”

*** rabbit” series, while Shia endured it with protest. Having entered this dungeon, although she almost died twice in short succession Shia was unexpectedly energetic. As expected, Shia’s forte was taking hits. Even though the person herself won’t admit it.

It was as Shia complained, there were other choices to evade the surprise attack, after all Hajime should be able to stop those blades from a while ago with his artificial arm. His coat’s also made from the leather of a demonic beast that boasted defense, and there were protectors underneath to guard the vital points, that’s right he wouldn’t have died from something like that.

However, the trap just now was nothing but overkill if it was against normal humans. If it were a normal protector, it’d be easily cut in two. After all, if you didn’t have the equipment that Hajime made from the materials that he’d gotten from the Abyss, there was no other way to survive than to avoid it.

“Well, there is no problem if it was that much”

While watching Yue and Shia’s quarrel with skeptical eyes, Hajime told that to himself. No matter how powerful, if it was just physical traps then it wouldn’t be able to kill Hajime. Yue also had her “Auto Regeneration.” She wouldn’t die over a trap. In other words… …Shia was the only one in danger. Even though he didn’t know if Shia had noticed that, it was probably because Shia’s stress level had reached the heavens.

“Huh? Hajime-san, what’s with those pitying eyes…”

“Please live strongly, Shia…”

“Eh, ee? What are you suddenly saying? Although I could felt something very unpleasant from it…”

* * *

Hajime and his party advanced while being wary of traps.

Even now, they hadn’t seen even one demonic beast. Although they considered the possibility that this dungeon didn’t have demonic beasts in it, that was just optimism. It wouldn’t be strange if they suddenly appeared, because that’s also a form of a trap.

Hajime and his party reached an open space after exiting the passageway. The roads were split into three inside the room. For now, Hajime put down the “mark”, then Hajime and his party chose the leftmost passage that lead to a staircase that went down.

“Uu~. somehow I got a bad feeling about this. Look, my rabbit ears restlessly move from left to right.”

Having advanced a few step on the stairs, suddenly, Shia blurted that out. Just as she said, Shia’s rabbit ears stood upright, then began to move left and right.

“You, don’t raise any strange flags now. If you say something like that, usually, something will immediately “GAKON“… see!

“I-It’s not my fault!?”

“… …Flag rabbit!”

While Hajime and Shia talked, an unpleasant sound resounded, and suddenly the stair’s steps disappeared. It was a considerably inclined staircase, and with the disappearance of the steps it became a slope. Moreover, tar-like slippery liquid began to overflow from the countless small holes on the surface.

“Kuh, this—!”

When the steps became a slope, Hajime immediately transmutated the minerals on the bottom of his shoes into spikes, his artificial arm's fingers were also made into spikes so that he wouldn't slip down. Yue immediately jumped to Hajime before she started to slip. Hajime who read that also braced himself. As expected, they were harmonized even in this place.

However, there was still one more person who was unable to do that kind of cooperation. It goes without saying that it was Shia.

"Ukyaaa!?"

When it became a slope, Shia raised a scream then the back of her head hit the surface hard. "Nuuaa!", as she writhed in pain, then slipped along while covered in that liquid. In that state, with her legs opened in a M character, she collided with Hajime's face.

"Bu!?"

The spikes on his artificial arm came off because of the impact, Hajime was overturned backward with his left arm holding Yue. Then the spikes on his feet also came off, he slipped down the slope headfirst. Shia was on top of Hajime with a reversed position.

"You! Clumsy rabbit! Move now!"

" I am sorry, but to move-～"

While slipping, their speed became faster. Hajime desperately tried to stab the spikes on his artificial arm and shoes on the ground, but they were too fast, so it didn't go well. Then, he tried to transmute the staircase but with the strong disintegration inside the dungeon, it also didn't turn out well.

Shia, while struggling was somehow able to get up. Now, it was as if she was riding Hajime.

"Use Doryukken's stake!"

Hajime gave an instruction to Shia. The Sledgehammer Doryukken that Shia carried had a few gimmicks prepared inside, one of them was to form a stake on the head part of the hammer. It was a mechanism to raise the penetrative power by focusing on one spot. If that was stabbed on the surface they should be able to stop.

"Y-yes, leave it to me!? Hajime-san! The road—!"

Shia tried to remove Doryukken from its fastening/holding device on her back. Then, Shia who looked forward immediately raised an uneasy voice.

Hajime was able to realize what had happened. When Shia slipped before, it was likely dropped.

“Kh! Yue!”

“Nn!”

Hajime immediately called out Yue’s name. Even with only that Yue was able to read Hajime’s intentions.

“Shia, hold on tight!”

“Y-yes!”

While still riding Hajime, Shia tightly clung to him.

Finally, they reached the end of the slope and they were thrown in the air. One moment of weightlessness/floating. At that chance, Yue invoked her magic.

“”Soar”!”

It was an elementary-ranked magic of wind system. It magic created a strong vertical updraft, and it’d increased one’s jumping power. An expert would be able to make pseudo-flight using this magic. However, in this place magical power was hard to maintain. That’s why, Yue’s magic only lasted for a few seconds and its effect only made Hajime and his party float.

“It’s enough.”

Hajime’s voice that was mixed with praise resounded. That’s right, for Hajime, it was enough if he got the time to confirm their surroundings. Yue completely and splendidly answered his expectations.

Hajime, with Yue on his left arm, and Shia clinging to his neck, hung his artificial arm toward the ceiling. Then, he poured his magic power…

PASHU!

A sound come out along with a thin wire with an anchor installed on it and shot out from his artificial arm, it pierced the ceiling’s wall. Then, because of the anchor they were fixed to their place.

Hajime and his party were currently hanging with one wire that hung on the ceiling, they felt relieved after confirming the anchor did not come off.

Then, they felt regret when they saw what was under them.

Kasakasakasa, washawashawasha, kiikii, kasakasakasa.

Those sounds came from a lot of scorpions wriggling around. Its length around 10 cm. Although it didn’t give off the same feeling

as that scorpion-look-alike, it gave them the psychological feeling of disgust. If they didn't halt their fall with the anchor, they would dive into a sea of scorpions, and it gave them goosebumps all over their bodies when they thought that.

“”” … …”””

The trio fell into silence. Because they didn't want to look below, they looked at the ceiling. Then, somehow they noticed lights emitting into some characters. It was already too late, Hajime and his party inadvertently read it.

“These guys doesn't have lethal poison.”

“But, you'll be paralyzed.”

“Please be satisfied by lying with these cute children, pugya—!!”

Maybe she purposely set up these phosphorus ores there, those characters were standing out in the dim space. Those who fell here would surely, with scorpions wriggling around their body, desperately try to move, and try to reach out to heaven (ceiling). Then, they'd discover it. Those playful words.

“”” … …”””

Once again, Hajime and his party fell into silence but because of

something else. “Ignore it, ignore it”,was what they told to themselves, and somehow they were able to observe their surroundings.

“… … Hajime, over there.”

“Nn?”

Because Yue noticed something, she pointed her finger to a certain place below. There was an empty tunnel.

“A tunnel… … what should we do? Are we going to climb up to our previous location or are we going over there?”

“I-I will follow Hajime-san’s decision. I have been nothing but a burden after all…”

“No need, the punishment will come from the dungeon, so don’t mind it.”

“That only makes me even more anxious! Isn’t it better to just say “don’t mind it”～”

“… …Impudent. The punishment will become twice.”

“Wh-wha, Yue-san also joined him!? Uu, even if the dungeon is conquered, the future looks dark.”

Hajime and Yue forgave Shia who lamented.

“Haa, no matter, what would be useful is if we could use your “chosen future”～”

“Uu, that was still. Although I’ve been practicing…”

“Chosen future” was Shia’s special magic. It was able to catch a glimpse of the future under some assumptions. However, it can only be used once a day, it was impractical because this special magic required large amounts of magic power to use. Even though Shia specialized in body strengthening, if her magic power drained she’d only be a shameless rabbit. Although the amount of consumption was decreasing because of daily training… … it was still a long way from mastering it.

“Well, it can’t be helped if we can’t use it. Rather than returning, it feels better to advance, so let’s go to the tunnel.”

“… … Nn”

“Yes.”

Hajime shot out another anchor then moved just like tarzan until

they safely reached the tunnel.

Hajime and his party advanced in the passageway that was lit by phosphorus ores while being vigilant about any unpleasant traps that might appear.

Arifureta: Volume 5 Chapter 5

Miledi Raisen II

At the doorway of a certain passage. You'd noticed that somehow there were only walls in the passage. Normally, one would see it as a dead end. However, some parts of the walls were actually connected to a room from several minutes ago.

Silence lingered in the air, immediately, sparks started to appear from the dead end-like wall, and a hole where people could pass through in a half-crouching position appeared. Creeping out of it were…

"Zehah zehah, hu-hurry it up."

"… …Nn, it'd be troublesome to be crushed by this."

"Well, I don't think that was at a level where you'll only feel troubled, right? Wouldn't you normally die from it?"

It was the trio of Hajime, Yue, and Shia. Hajime and his party were wandering around after escaping via the tunnel inside the scorpions' room. Then, they arrived at a room that had a standard trap where the ceiling dropped down and crushed them.

They were unable to escape the room because the range was too vast. Immediately, Hajime and Shia used their backbones to support the ceiling, and with that chance he used transmutation to make a hole in the ceiling.

Most of all, transmutation was becoming harder to use because of strong magic disintegration in this place, the speed of transmutation became a quarter of the usual, and the range only one meter, while the amount of magic consumption became tenfold the usual. That's why, Hajime only managed to transmute a small space just enough to hold three people, and they moved toward the exit.

"Damn, even "High-speed magic recovery" was useless. The amount of recovered was too small"

"… … for now, do you want to drink… … recovery potion?"

"Now now, please drink your full~"

"You guys, somehow you have too much composure…"

Hajime who felt a little tired, sat while leaning on the wall, Yue held the gesture of feeding someone chocolate, while Shia got the magic-recovery potion from her pouch. Although it was possible to use the magic crystallization stone to replenish his magic, while it was convenient to get magic power from it, he wanted to preserve it. Furthermore in this situation it was more appropriate to use a magic-recovery potion.

Hajime who felt that he was in a play, as a salary-man with Yue and Shia, and thought, “I can’t make any rebuttal on it”, while he received the recovery potion and drink it in a flash. It tasted almost the same as Li**vitan D. Hajime felt the differences in speed and amount of recovery from magic crystallization stone was significant compared to this, but he could feel that his vitality had recovered a lot. “Ush!”, was how he psyched himself up and stood up.

Once again, they discovered those annoying sentences.

“Pupu—, in a hurry~?, how uncou~th”

Apparently these annoying sentences were a set along with the traps. Miledi Raisen… … was a person who put in a lot of effort to harass someone.

“W-we aren’t in a hurry! Absolutely not! We aren’t that uncouth!”

Having traced Hajime’s gaze, Shia who found those annoying sentences let out, “GRR!”, while protesting toward those characters. It seemed Shia’s hostility toward Miledi already reached the heavens. She reacted every time she found those annoying sentences. Probably, if Miledi was still alive she would have said, “Good prey have come!”, while grinning.

“Ignore that, let’s go. You don’t need to mind that every time.”

“… …What you thought is important.”

“Uu, okay.”

Afterwards, they advanced on the passage, and they reached rooms with other traps waiting. Suddenly, poisoned arrows came from every direction, sulfuric acid-like liquid which melted anything that entered the pitfall, there was also a room where the floor turned into something like an Antlion Nest, with a worm-like demonic beasts in the center of the room, also the annoying sentences. The stress level of Hajime and his party increased at mach speed.

Even so, they passed through all of the traps, and arrived at the biggest passage they had gone through in this dungeon. Its width around 6-7 meters. It gradually became a slope that bent to the right. It was probably a passage that descended in a spiral shape.

Hajime and his party kept vigilant. There was no way that a passage like this didn’t had any traps in it.

After a while, their thoughts proved to be right. An unpleasant sound, “GAKONn!”, of a mechanism could be heard. Immediately, they realized that they hadn’t stepped on or pushed any switches. Then, you didn’t need to use switches before!, was the grand rebuttal that Hajime thought, surely Miledi Raisen would have been happy to hear that as he let out a “Guh.”

What kind of trap is it now?, was what Hajime and his party thought while examining their surroundings vigilantly. Then they

heard something.

GOROGOROGOROGOROGOROGOROGOROGORO

It was the sound of something heavy rolling down.

“”” … …”””

The trio went silent and looked at each others, then they looked overhead at the same time. They couldn’t see anything because the slope was curved. The strange noise became louder, then… … a giant boulder as big as the passage rolled down from the curve. The rock was in the form of a big ball. It was a completely standard trap. Surely, after they desperately ran away, those annoying sentences would be there.

Yue and Shia already turned their heels to run away as fast as they could. However, they were immediately stopped. It was because Hajime didn’t move away.

“… …Nn, Hajime?”

“Hajime-san!? Let’s hurry or else we will be crushed!”

The duo called out to him, however Hajime didn’t answer back, then kneeled down while extending his right hand straight forward. His palm hung towards the big ball. Finally, he drew out

his left arm with ‘Ghgh’, to the limit, and “Kiiiii!!”, the sound of an activated mechanism resounded.

Hajime watched the approaching, roaring big ball, and his lips transformed into a fierce smile.

“Every time, I won’t always do what you expect! It doesn’t fit my nature!”

From his artificial arm, “Kiiiii!!”, sound of mechanism became louder along with Hajime’s word.

Then…

GOGAaAAN!!!

A loud sound of something being destroyed emerged when Hajime’s artificial arm met the big ball. The big ball’s force only pushed Hajime back a little, thanks to his spikes, while Hajime’s attacked crushed the big ball at the center when they collided, and it was cracked all over. The big ball’s force disappearing could be seen.

“RAaAAA!!”

Hajime shook his left fist along with the roar. Because the big ball’s durability was barely exceeded by the power of Hajime’s fist, it

crumbled, and Hajime's fist was the victor. A thundering sound could be heard when the big ball crumbled and scattered into tiny pieces.

Hajime draw back his fist while shaking it, then "Fuh", he stood up. The sound of mechanisms couldn't be heard anymore from his artificial arm. Hajime observed his artificial left arm to check for any abnormalities while clasping and opening the hand. Then he turned to Yue and Shia.

His expression was truly refreshing. "I did it!", was the feeling it emitted. It seemed Hajime also couldn't take it anymore, because he had accumulated too much stress from the traps that he couldn't detect followed by those annoying words.

What Hajime used this time was the same attack that defeat one of Faea Belgaen's Elders, a combination of a bullet's explosive power and "Great Arm," in addition, he used his artificial arm to invoke vibration magic to crush the boulder, in other words an oscillation fracture. Because of the huge burden, it was only to be used once, normally it was his last resort… … but he couldn't endure it so that happened.

Hajime, with a satisfied expression, turned around and he was greeted by Yue and Shia who were excited.

"Hajime-sa~n! Just as expected of you! That was so cool! That was so neat!"

"… …Nn, neat."

“Hahaha, of course, of course. With this, the path…”

Hajime wanted to answer to their praise. However, his words were interrupted.

GOROGOROGOROGOROGOROGOROGOROGORO

They could hear that sound. Hajime’s smile stiffened. Shia also stiffened her smile and the expressionless Yue twitched her cheeks. Hajime turned around with ‘GIGIGI,’ as if he was a machine that was forgot to be oiled and what greeted him was…

— — — — — a big metallic ball that shone with a black luster.

“Lies”

Hajime inadvertently muttered that while having a stiff smile.

“U-umm, Hajime-san. Maybe it was just my imagination, but, somehow that thing also scatters a strange liquid…”

“… …It melts.”

That's right, the big metallic ball approached them while scattering liquid around that came from small holes on its surface, and places that got splattered with the liquid melted, with a 'Shuwa—,' that kind of dangerous sound.

Hajime, after confirming that, "Fuu~", let out a breath, then faced Yue and Shia with a smile. After that, while smiling he shouted, "Let's run! Damn it!", and immediately he splendidly started running to descend the slope, just like a sprinter.

Yue and Shia also looked at each other for a while then, 'kururi,' chased after Hajime in a dash.

At their backs, the sound of metal touching the ground along with the dissolution liquid approached them with its speed that gradually increased.

"NOoOOO!! I absolutely don't want to be melted~!"

"… …Nn, let's run for now."

Shia's lament echoed inside the passage.

"Rather, Hajime-sa~n! Its cruel to run ahead of us! Cold-hearted! Demon!"

Shia protested to Hajime who ran ahead of them.

“Noisy! It’s a calculation error, a calculation error! Just shut up and run!”

“What’s with that excuse! You don’t care if anything happens to me, right!? Uwaa~n, I’ll come to haunt you if I die!”

“… … Shia, surprisingly calm?”

Even while desperately running away, Shia was able to firmly complain, Yue was amazed by it.

They finally saw the end of the passage. He confirmed it with “Far-sight,” apparently it was quite a big and wide space. However, what he saw was a little strange. He couldn’t see the floor of the room even after a long time. Perhaps, the exit of the passage that Hajime and his party were on was on top of the room’s ceiling.

“It’ll be a descent!”

“Nn.”

“Yes!”

Hajime and his party were sliding when they passed through the passage to the room, they descended on the exit.

Then,

“Geh!?”

“Nnh!?”

“Hinh!?”

Three different groans were raised. Right under the exit was a pool filled with an obviously dangerous liquid.

“That bastard!”

Hajime immediately shot out knives from his artificial arm, then used his artificial arm’s anchor, while his right arm caught Yue to prevent her from falling.

At the same time, the metallic ball that scattered around dissoluting liquids dashed out overhead, and fell into the pool before their eyes. It sunk with ‘blub blub,’ sounds, while smoke rose.

“”Wind Wall””

Yue used her magic to disperse the scattered corrosive liquid. For a while, they carefully examined their surroundings and nothing else happened, finally Hajime let his tension leave his shoulders.

“Sob, hic, why only me… … only me… … uu, sob”

Somehow at her side, Shia’s crying voice could be heard, if you look carefully she was stuck onto the wall by having several knives pierce her clothing, pinning her to the wall..

” ? Why did you suddenly cry?”

“… …Emotionally unstable?”

“If you see my current state you should understand. Why was only Yue-san held gently, while I was crucified. Hajime-sa～n, please, can you just be even a little dere to me?”

“Well, didn’t I save you?”

“That’s wrong. I want to be saved in the state that more girl-like… … you understand right!? I wanted to be saved while being held just like Yue-san!”

“… … Shia”

“Sob, what is it, Yue-san?”

“… …Look at the reality”

“What does that mean!?”

“You see, Shia. You’re only our companion, and that’s how I’ll treat you… … Yue is the one I love after all, that’s why it can’t be helped that my body moved on reflex, right?”

“Uu～”

After the justifiable complaint and those justifiable words were said, while ‘pura～n,’ crucified, tears floated on the edge of Shia’s eyes and groaning could be heard. When he said, “the one I love”, Yue’s cheeks were blushing, and while being held by Hajime she rubbed her cheek against Hajime’s chest.

“Absolu～tely, I will make you fall for me and save me by holding me!”

“What a spirited fellow～”

“… …You have the spirit… … I will pay attention to it.”

Under them was the pool of corrosive liquid, while hanging, Hajime and his party still did the love-comedy antic. They were quite composed as expected.

Hajime and his party moved like a pendulum using the anchor, then landed to the ground after jumping over the pool of dissolution liquid.

It was a large rectangular room. On the both side of the walls, there were sets of two meter tall knight armor equipped with large swords and shields. Furthest from the room was a staircase, before that was an altar and there was a door that gave out solemn aura. On the altar was a diamond shaped yellow crystal.

Hajime who looked at that surroundings frowned slightly.

“That was quite a door. Is it Miledi’s hobby? If that’s so then I’ll cheer… … is it only me or aren’t those suits of knight armor giving off a bad feeling?”

“… … it’s okay, it’ll be just like promised.”

“Are they going to attack us? It won’t be absolutely okay after all?”

Hajime and his party advanced toward the center of the room while saying that, surely it was as promised.

The sound that was familiar to them came out.

GAKON!

Hajime and his party immediately halt. They thought, “As expected~”, while looking around at their surroundings, and from the eye slits in the knight’s helmets, ‘GINn’, it shone. Then, ‘gashagasha,’ sounds of metal rubbing each other came when those knights moved from their spot. They numbered 50.

Those knights, raised their shields while wielding their large swords in a piercing stance with their waist slightly lowered. Then, they completed the encirclement.

“Haha, it really is as promised. Although it was okay to destroy them before they moved. Well, there is no need to say… … Yue, Shia, shall we?”

“Nnh”

“A-aren’t they are too many? Well, I’ll do it anyway…”

Hajime pulled out Donner-Schlag. Although Metherai’s machine gun was more effective against such numbers, he didn’t know how many traps were set in this room. The barrage of bullets that shot out indiscriminately would trigger all of them. Therefore, he chose the two railguns.

Yue answered Hajime's words with a yell filled with fighting spirit. She understood that she had the least fire-power inside this dungeon. However, she would not be a burden. As Hajime's partner, she won't lose to something like this. Even more so from now, there would be existences acting as her rivals in love, so she must not show any weaknesses.

On Shia's side, she lowered her waist a little. This party member was the lowest in terms of influence, but not her power. She knew her battle experience was still considerably insufficient. First of all the battle against demonic beasts in the ravine merely lasted for five days. Even if the mock battle against Yue was included, it was only a little over two weeks of battle experience. Because she also came from the Haulia tribe renowned for their gentleness, it was impossible for her to have a resolute attitude in battle. Rather, it could be said she showed great guts just to hold Doryukken while confronting her enemies.

"Shia."

"Y-yes! Wh-what is it, Hajime-san"

Shia answered with a nervous voice when she heard Hajime's voice calling her. His voice was more tender than usual… … or maybe it was just Shia's imagination.

"You are strong. We guarantee it. You won't lose against these golems. That's why, don't ever think you're weak. If it becomes dangerous I'll come to help for sure."

“… …Nn, it’s my job to take care of my apprentice’s problems.”

Having heard Hajime and Yue’s words, Shia inadvertently became teary eyed. She was simply happy. Although she was treated harshly, when she thought it was because she was a burden, it made her feel uneasy… … it was a needless anxiety. A novice should only do what a novice can do, as best she could. Shia activated whole body strengthening, then she powerfully and firmly stomped on the ground.

“Fufu, Hajime-san is a little dere now. I’m full of motivation now! Yue-san, the day for me to surpass you must be close.”

“” … …Don’t get carried away.””

Although Hajime and Yue said that with amazed looks, Shia who had her tension maxed didn’t hear that. She faced straight ahead and glared at the knights.

“Here I! Come!”

“No, like I’ve said before, how did you get that material… … ah, she’s already gone.”

“… …Daa~”

“… … I won’t refute that. I absolutely won’t refute that”

With 50 Golem Knights in front of him, Hajime carried a tired expression even before the fight began. As if they understood Hajime’s state… … the Golem Knights started to attack the intruders all at once.

Arifureta: Volume 5 Chapter 6

Miledi Raisen III

The Golem knights' movements were agile, despite their large build. 'Gashah gashah', was the noise that appeared while they rapidly approached, they gave off intense force along with their glinting weapons. It was as if walls were closing in from all directions.

And Hajime aimed at those golem knights. Even though the two railguns he grasped in his hands were only able to put out power less than half the usual, their power that was still several times that of a real rifle, and was shot at the golem knights.

DOPAN! DOPAN!

Two flashes of light targeted and shot two golem knights' heads accurately, at the eyes' parts. The knights fell on their backs from the impact to their heads. When the next set of knights drew near, Hajime lightly jumped. Then he shot them in rapid succession, and the lethal encirclement was thrown into disarray.

Having endured Hajime's storm-like gunfire using shields, large swords, and the bodies of their companions, several knights finally drew near Hajime and his party.

However, that was the gray hair with a blue hue Shia Haulia's killzone, who had set up her superheavy Sledgehammer in the air. Without any need to talk, with her physical ability strengthened to the limit, she let out a blow that cleared away everything.

"Deeyaaa!!"

DOoGAAAA!!

There was a yell. She brought down her Sledgehammer, Doryukken, with a tremendous impacting sound one of the golem knights was flattened. Although the knight set up its shield beforehand, it defense was still crushed.

There were cracks and a dent on the ground caused by Doryukken. The attack was released with all her might, maybe after it confirmed the dead body, a knight was able to set up its shield and endure the impact, while trying to cut Shia in two with its large sword.

Shia firmly confirmed that with a side glance. Twisting the handle, she adjusted the angle of Doryukken's head, then pulled the trigger.

DOGANn!!

Such an explosive sound came from Doryukken that was on the ground and it jumped. At Shia's side a shotshell fluttered after

rejecting from its case. While riding on Doryukken's momentum, Shia rotated in her place and delivered a blow carrying great centrifugal force. The knight that tried to bring down its large sword was hit in its flank.

"Rhaaa!!"

She let out a shout filled with vigor. The knight that received the direct hit had its body bent, as if it was run over by a speeding truck, it magnificently rolled to the back and hit the other approaching knights. The knight's body, because it was unable to stop itself, was squashed and did not gave any sign of movement.

Hyun Hyun

That sound of wind entered Shia's rabbit ears. When she took a peek at it, it was a large sword that the golem knights had raised, it was rotating mid-air after having parted from the knight. Shia jumped and grabbed the large sword, and then with all her might, she threw it at the oncoming golem knight.

The large sword flew with great velocity, and when it collided with the shield that the golem knight had set, the shield was flipped. Not missing that chance, Shia swung Doryukken from below. The golem knight which had a large build received the impact in its abdomen and floated in the air. Although it tried to swing the large sword in desperation, Shia raised Doryukken then using the centrifugal force, clashed with the large sword, and this time Doryukken attacked the floating knight from a lower angle.

Just like the previous golem knight, was blown away like a cannonball and flew at the nearby golem knights, swallowing them with its large build and laid on the ground.

A smile floated on Shia's lips. It was not like she felt the pleasure of fighting. She was only happy that she could fight properly. She felt that she could continue traveling with Hajime and Yue now. At that moment, she was a little distracted.

On the battlefield, such a thing is fatal. When she'd noticed, a lot of knights' shields had already drawn near. Somehow, the golem knights decided to throw their shields toward Shia. As expected of golems, they flew with extraordinary power, although it wouldn't be fatal against Shia's strengthened body, they have enough power to cause a concussion. If that happens, it's easy to imagine what'll happen next.

How careless! Though there was no time to think that, she at least tried to steel herself to endure the incoming attacks. Then, a laser-like water current attacked the shields right before they collided with Shia, and it bent their trajectories. The shields passed by the sides of Shia's head, then crashed into the golem knights behind her.

"… …Unpreparedness is one's greatest enemy. Punishment will be thrice the usual."

"Fue!? Just now, was that from Yue-san? I-I am sorry, also thank you very much! Wait, punishment will be thrice!?"

“Nn… … don’t daydream.”

“Uh, yes! I will try my best!”

With a “Meh!” —like feeling Yue scolded her, Shia was also conscious of her small carelessness. She braced herself while reflecting on it. Once more, she tried to defeat the approaching golem knights. With help from water lasers that flew from behind her back, the golem knight that tried to perform a sneak attack from behind of Shia was confirmed to be cleanly bi-sected.

Shia felt a warm feeling inside her knowing that Yue will protect her back. To not show any disgrace in front of her master, she raised her fighting spirit.

Afterwards, the same water current flew at the knight who tried to go into the rampaging Shia’s blind spot, and cut it just with sharpness keener than blades. What Yue used was middle-ranked magic from water system called “Rupture.” It was a water cutter that fired the moisture in the air at ultra high-pressure.

In Yue’s hands were big metallic water bottles. There were also two other water bottles on her shoulder strap. These were something taken out by Hajime from “Treasure Box.” Every time Yue muttered the magic’s name, water cutter would fly out from the water bottles that she held.

Although Yue was able to use the moisture in the air, she thought it would consume too much magic power to pressurize it from scratch. Moreover, utilizing the exit of the water bottle to aim, the

water cutter that came out didn't contain magic itself, so it wouldn't affected by the disintegration and disappear.

Shia's explosive area attack, was supported by Yue's water blade that covered her blind spots. The knights were incapable of breaking the duo's combination, and one by one they were destroyed as if being played with.

Hajime who took a side glance to look at Yue and Shia's splendid cooperation floated a wry smile.

"Oioi, you can do it after all. I wonder if I would also be capable of displaying something good?"

While joking to himself, Hajime started to enter close-combat with Donner-Schlag (…).

He warded off a descending large sword of a knight with Schlag's barrel, and shot its helmet at zero distance with Donner in his right hand. Without looking at that knight who flew backwards, he warded off an attack from behind with Schlag, and shot the knight behind him without turning around, then he squatted down while rotating to dodge large swords that were swung horizontally, the knights' hands were intersected and he shot their sides.

A shot that didn't use "Lightning-clad" ricocheted from the knight's shield and hit a nearby knight's knee joint, destroying its balance. And then he jumped up and while reversing his view, he destroyed the knight and another nearby knight at the same time from overhead. He parried large swords aimed at him with the back of

his hands, then fired to his side while mid-air and four knights' heads were shot and crushed at the same time. As he landed, he took the bullets from "Treasure Box," and reloaded the guns by spinning them, and he resumed shooting while spinning. The surrounding knights were blown away radially.

Doing that, without leaving a chance to be scratched, they slaughtered those golem knights one by one.

However…

"… …?"

While counterattacking the golem knights, Hajime raised his eyebrows in doubt. The reason being that, although a lot of the golem knights were destroyed, there was no change of density that approaching.

It seems, Yue and Shia were also having that doubt. Finally, when they carefully observed the battlefield, the golem knights that they had defeated could not be seen.

"… …Replication?"

"Looks like it."

"That can't be!? Then, it won't end at all!"

That's right, after the golem knights were destroyed and lost the glint in their eyes, more knights with the same glint and body as those knights were reproduced in no time and rejoined the rank.

Shia raised a panicked voice while mowing down the approaching knights. It was reasonable to say that, after all no matter how many she defeated there was no meaning to it. However, Hajime and Yue were calm, there was no impatience in their expressions as they kicked around the golem knights. This might be what is called a difference in experiences. They had experienced something like this many times in the depths of the Abyss. Naturally, they were stronger now.

"… …Hajime, if it's a golem then there must be a core"

Just as Yue had said, it was normal for golem to have a core inside its body, and that core was the source of its power. The core was made using demonic beasts' magic stones. It was written down on blueprint of Oscar's cleaning golem. What Yue said was to destroy that core.

However, Hajime floated a bitter expression having known Yue's proposal.

"What can I say, these guys didn't have a core at all."

"… … Really?"

“Aa, I have confirmed it using magic eye, there is no mistake about it. Although I was able to find some suspicious magic power from the golem…”

“I-it ended with that after all! It’ll be bad if this keeps up!”

Shia raised her voice filled with impatience. Hajime only let Shia’s shout pass through his ears, then used “Mineral Appraisal.” For golems that operated without core, he wondered, “Are they made using special ore?”

His thoughts were right on the money.

Induction Ore
An ore that naturally induces magic. It was able to establish a connection of magic power between two or more induction ores, using one ore, other ores with an established connection of magic power can be remotely controlled.

These golem knights made using induction stone must have something that acted as a remote control. Although Hajime and his party thought it was replication, it was actually rearrangement by manipulating the ore, they only needed to add to the parts that were insufficient. It’s actually more like reconstructing rather than replicating.

If you looked carefully, you'd notice that the floor was also made using the induction ore, and parts that that appeared to be cut away could be seen. Those were probably used to replenish the parts of the golems. Without defeating the controller, it'd be truly endless.

"Yue, Shia. There must be something that's controlling them. Because it's seriously endless, let's breakthrough them!"

"Nnh."

"B-breakthrough? Affirmative!"

Under Hajime's signal, Yue and Shia immediately dashed out toward the altar. Hajime advanced using Donner-Schlag's rapid-fire against the knights and as they scattered a path was created, two grenades were thrown toward the knights that approached from behind. With a big explosion in the back, the golems knights were felled one after another by the blast and the shockwave.

Shia advanced through the space that Hajime made, while rotating Doryukken, mowing down golem knights all the while. The golem knights were skillfully throwing their shields and large swords at Shia only to have Yue's "Rupture" come and split them.

Hajime whose duty was to guard the rear, fired his railguns in rapid succession at the golem knights approaching from behind. Using the opportunity, Shia passed through the encirclement and arrived in front of the altar. Next was Yue who arrived in front of the door after jumping over the altar.

“Yue-san! The door-!?”

“Nn… …It was sealed after all.”

“Au, as expected!”

In front of their eyes were the suspicious altar and door. They had guessed it’d be sealed. That’s why, they originally thought it’d be troublesome and decided to slaughter the knights instead. While they resolved to release the seal on the door. Shia complained as usual, which resulted in knights flying in from the stairs.

“I’ll leave the seal to Yue. It’d take too much time to breakthrough it using transmutation.”

Hajime stood beside Shia to look out for her back. Just as Hajime said, to forcibly use transmutation to breakthrough the door, although it might be possible, it’d consume large amounts of magic power in this area, and it’d also take a lot of time. That’s why, having reached the altar with the yellow crystal with so much effort, it was faster to release the seal normally. Hajime who thought so, left the duty to Yue who had bad magic consumption.

“Nn… … leave it to me.”

Yue readily acknowledged that and immediately took the yellow

crystal from the altar. That crystal was in a square made of pyramids shape, if you looked carefully it was made from combinations of solid blocks.

Yue looked back at the door behind her. There were three indentations there. Yue thought for a while, then started to disassemble the square of pyramids. She reassembled those blocks to make new cubes that fit the indentations.

While assembling those, Yue observed the indentations in the door. Then, only by carefully observing it she noticed small characters that were carved there. They said…

“I wonder if can you solve it~, I wonder~”

“You’ll die if you don’t do it fast, you know~”

“Well, it can’t be helped if you can’t solve it! You’re just an ordinary human unlike me after all!”

“Don’t worry! Even if your head is bad you can liv-… … you can’t live! How regre~ttable! Pugyaa—!”

They were the annoying sentences as usual. Yue was truly irritated by it. With her usual expressionlessness, she concentrated to solve the puzzle although she wanted to punch the door.

Somehow, Hajime and Shia could feel her anger from her back, and could only curse in their minds while concentrating on destroying golem knights.

“Hajime-sa~n. Please use DOPAh just like before~”

Like a certain black thing from the kitchen, the golem knights swarmed disgustingly, that’s why Shia begged Hajime to use a grenade.

“Idiot. That must be thrown where it was sure no trap was installed. If it was thrown near the stairs, you must know what might happen.”

“You said it now even after it laid waste to the golems before?”

“Well, it was something Miledi Raisen made. Isn’t it possible that it won’t react only against golem?”

“Uu, I can’t refute that…”

In certain ways, Hajime and Shia only played around with the golem knights so they could make idle talk. In the beginning, Shia was truly impatient about it, but when she saw how calm Hajime and Yue were, she calmed down.

“But, it made me somewhat happy.”

“Aa?”

Once more, while smashing a golem knight then making it fly with a kick, Shia blurted that out.

“Just a little while ago, I, who was only capable of running away, was able to fight together with Hajime-san… … it made me so happy.”

“… …You are truly a curious one.”

“Ehehe, I, finally able to flirt with Hajime-san after we capture dungeon ! Yay.”

“Oi, you. How did you connect to that, it’s the same as raising a death flag. To be a tragic heroine will be too much for you, so stop that. Also, I just can’t rebutted it, but you know this material, right?”

“It was, “I absolutely won’t let you die, my honey?”, something like that? Hajime-san, mouh!”

“You twisted it too much! Recently, although I was scared of your positivity… … I don’t have any appropriate remarks for it…”

They kept chatting for several minutes while repelling those knights. In a way, in the space between the two who kept flirting, “nuu~,” a shadow appeared. It was Yue.

“… …Flirting is forbidden.”

“Well, we didn’t do anything like that.”

“Nufufu, is that what it looks like? How embarrassing~”

“It’s better for you to shut up…”

Somewhat, after Hajime look with a side glance at Shia with a tired expression, he turned to Yue who looked a little displeased. However, without re-thinking about this situation, this time she showed a little proud look having done a great achievement.

“… …It’s open.”

“How fast, just as expected of Yue. Shia, fall back!”

“Yes!”

Hajime took a peek behind him, and as Yue said, the seal had released and the door was open. There seemed to be nothing

unusual inside the room. Hajime told Shia to withdraw, then he retreated toward the room. The golem knights wouldn't able to chase after them if they closed the sealed door. Yue was the first to retreat, next was Shia who jumped beyond the door, and because it was a double door they were on standby at both sides to close it.

Hajime threw several grenades as farewell gifts, and dived into the room. Although the golem knights rushed after their escape, they were scattered by the strong impact that came from the grenades. Their balance were destroyed. Without missing that chance, Yue and Shia closed the door.

Inside the room, using farsight it was confirmed that there was nothing at all. Surely, even if it was not Miledi Raisen's room, there must be some clue leading to it, right?, and that was what they thought while losing their momentum.

"This, isn't it that? Even though there was a conspicuous seal, there was actually nothing inside, is it that kind of punchline?"

"… …That can't be"

"Uu, Miledi. How much do you want to take us for a fool!"

The trio were dropped because of that most possible possibility, suddenly, they heard the familiar unpleasant sound.

GAKON!

“”” !?”””

Along with the sound of mechanisms beginning to operate, the room trembled. Then, G came from the side of Hajime and his party.

“Kh!? What happen!? Did the room just move!?”

“… …Looks like i—!?”

“Ukya!?”

At the same time Hajime said that, this time the G came from above. Because of the radical change, Yue may have bitten her tongue as she covered her mouth with teary eyes while trembling. Shia fell from the ceiling in a frog-like pose.

The room continued to change its direction several more times, it was stopped after approximately 40 seconds of ignoring the law of inertia. Hajime was able to endure the impact of a sudden stop by fixing his location using spikes driven into the ground, while Shia who unable to endure it, was rolling around, flying, and hit the back of her head hard against the wall. She rolled over here, she rolled over there, and raised a scream every it changed direction, that’s why her complexion was bad. It was as if she was drunk. She was completely down like a drunk with sharp pain in the back of her head. By the way, since the start Yue was clinging to Hajime’s body so she had no problems at all.

“Fuu~, finally stopped… … Yue, are you okay?”

“… …Nn, no problem.”

Hajime retracted the spikes and stood up. There was no change at all when he observed the surroundings. Considering the movement, the door they entered from should connect to a different place.

“Ha-Hajime-san. Why are there no words for me?”

Shia who cover her mouth with blue face, stared at Hajime. It seems she was displeased because he only asked Yue.

“Well, if I ask the current you it’ll reverse the momentum… … and then you’ll throw-up and get vomiting rabbit as a new title, you don’t want that, right?”

“Of course! Even so, I wanted to be asked because that was a maide — uppu.”

“See, it’s better for you to rest a little now”

“Uu. Uppu.”

Leaving alone Shia who was on all fours that seemed to vomit at any moment, Hajime and Yue confirmed the surrounding. Finally, there was nothing after all and they faced the door.

“Well then, what shall we do?”

“… …Is the one that controlled it there?”

“There is that possibility. Miledi should have died… … then who on earth moved those golem knights.”

“… …No matter who appears, it’s all right. Hajime will be protected by me… … subsequently, Shia too.”

“I can’t hear you~ uppu.”

Hajime smiled, having heard Yue’s typical words. Gently, with one hand he rubbed Yue’s head. Yue who wanted to be spoiled came closer while pleasantly narrowing her eyes.

“… …Even though I remembered saying this before, could you stop suddenly entering into a world of just the two of you? What can I say, to be alienated makes me feel so lonely, uppu.”

While enduring the nausea, “I don’t want to be left out!”, was what Shia expressed while crawling on all fours.

“… …Even though I had also said it before, it still comes out, so could you stop that horror flick-like movement? What can I say, it’d be scary if it appeared in my dreams.”

“T-that’s good. To be beside you even just a little is a maiden’s heart-, uppu. I also wanted to be patted just like Yue-san. Please embrace me and pat me! Ue, uppu.”

“To say that with a face of someone who will vomit at any moment… … moreover to casually add your own demands.”

“… …It is still too early for Shia to be patted by Hajime.”

With her willpower, Shia came to Hajime and Yue’s side, she looked at Hajime with expectant eyes and a pale face. Hajime quietly averted his gaze to face the door. Behind him, “Why! Ueppu”, was the noise that could be heard, but he just let it pass through his ears.

On the other side of the door, will it be Miledi’s dwelling, golem’s controller, or just another trap… … Hajime thought, “Come whatever it is”, while he opened the door with a fearless smile.

There was…

“… …Have I seen it before? This room.”

“… …Certainly. Especially that lithograph.”

Ahead of the opened door was another room. There was a lithograph and passage at the left side of the room. They should have memories of this room. Because, this room was…

“It looks like… … the first room, right?”

Shia thought that even though she said it, she didn’t want to think it was so. However, certainly, just as Shia said there was the lithograph with the annoying sentences carved, just like the first room. But there was a difference from that room. The proof was, after several seconds the door opened, characters floated up from the original room’s floor.

“Nee, right now, how do you feel?”

“Even though you had advanced after much hardships, only to arrive at the starting point, how do you feel?”

“Nee, nee, how do you feel? What kind of feeling do you have? Nee, nee.”

“””… …”””

The expressions of Hajime and his party ‘suton,’ fell from their faces. Their expressions perfectly fit the words ‘Noh mask’. The trio watched as the characters silently and smoothly moved. Then, additional characters started to appear.

“Ah, there is something I forgot to say, this dungeon will be altered at regular intervals.”

“As usual, it was Miledi-chan’s thoughtfulness to make you enjoy the dungeon with a fresh feeling.”

“Are you happy? You are happy, right? There is no need to reward me! I only do it because I like it after all!”

“By the way, because it always changes, mapping it was useless.”

“Don’t tell me, did you make it? With so much hardship? But, sorry! Pugyaa—”

“Ha, hahaha.”

“FUFUFUFU.”

“FUHI, FUHIHIHI.”

The trio let out three different types of broken laughter. Afterwards, needless to say screams were echoed through the entirety of the dungeon. After getting through the first passage, it was just as Miledi said, the stairs were greatly altered along with the differing position of the corridor ahead of them. It goes without saying that they let out resentful voices again because of the structure.

Somehow they manage to regain their spirits, Hajime and his party once again tried to conquer the dungeon. However, it wasn't a smooth sailing as expected, especially Shia who always triggered the traps (gold basin, bird lime, shots of liquids with strange smell, etc), "weren't those psychologically dangerous?", that is to say she became totally enraged, well troublesome things are troublesome after all.

Then, they connected back to the starting scene.

Arifureta: Volume 5 Chapter 7

The Person Inside the Golem

Inside a certain room, pale light was faintly emitted by the walls, and the shadows of three people close to the wall were cast. It was Hajime, Yue, and Shia.

Yue was on Hajime's right side, while Shia was on his left, and they sat while leaning against his shoulders. Although silence filled the room, if one focused their ears 'suu- suu-,' sounds could be heard. It was Yue and Shia's breathing. They were both embracing one of Hajime's arms and slept using his shoulders as a substitute for a pillow.

Today marks one week since Hajime and his party entered the dungeon of Raisen. During that time, a lot of traps and annoying sentences continued to exhaust their bodies and minds. They had been returned to the starting point seven times, attacked by lethal traps 48 times, and other meaningless traps for 169 times. Even though at first their hearts were filled with anger toward Miledi Raisen, after four days had passed it looked like their mental states became, "No matter what appears next, it doesn't matter～"

They had an abundance of rations, and their bodies' specs made it so that they wouldn't easily die were the fortune within their misfortune . Now, they were resting after advancing, searching for clues all the while. As a result, they understood the pattern of the structure alteration. Using "mark," they were able to confirm where those blocks were repositioned.

There might be additional progress from now on. While he thought that, Hajime turned toward the girls that slept on his sides.

“They sleep so comfortably… … isn’t this a Great Dungeon?”

Hajime’s murmur mixed with a wry smile resounded. He had stayed up for a long time as the lookout. Hajime quietly released his arm that somehow got embraced, and stroked Yue’s hair. A slight smile could be seen. Hajime’s eyes also slightly reverted to their former state.

Next, he changed his glance to Shia on the other side. She splendidly drooled on Hajime’s shoulder while “munya munya,” she moved her mouth, and it truly was a slackened sleeping expression. He remembered that she also wanted her head patted, so he quietly stroked Shia’s hair. Immediately, he felt the rabbit ears’ fluffiness. It was followed by her showing a loosened expression that she doesn’t show even under normal circumstances. It was a truly relieved expression. For the most part, it only occurs when Hajime was on lookout, well, it could be said that she’d feel relieved when Hajime was by her side.

Hajime who gently stroked the blue-hued gray hair, as well as the rabbit ears, showed a complex expression.

“Geez, just what’s good about someone like me… … that you would follow me, even here…”

He looked at Shia with tender eyes while throwing abusive words at himself. The thing that Shia sought could be compared to the feelings that Yue had. Even so, Shia's positive attitude, cheerfulness, and how she cried but never gave up… … greatly attracted Hajime's fancy. As a result, his strokes became even gentler. And, at that time, Shia who "munya munya," started to talk in her sleep.

"Munya… … Au… … Hajime-san, how bold~, to do it outside~, … … everyone will be able to see~"

"… …"

Hajime who looked at her with gentle eyes immediately erased his smile. He gently used both hands, and quietly moved them, to pinch Shia's nose and close her mouth. Shia's calm expression gradually changed to a painful one, but he didn't mind it and kept doing it.

"Nn~, nn? Nnh~!? Nnn–!! Nn–!! Puhah! Haa, haa, wh-what are you doing!? Even though it was an attack while I sleep, it has the wrong meaning!"

Shia who "zeha zeha," panted, woke up then fiercely protested, Hajime turned toward her with cold eyes.

"Well? Inside your mind, what kind of a pervert am I? What will you do outside? Nn?"

“Eh? … … hah, that was a dream!? Why~, even though Hajime-san finally became dere, it was impossible to suppress the pathos that gushed out, and the bashfulness of me that writhes in agony because of those words, finally decided in publi- hebuh!?”

Without listening to anymore of it, Hajime used strengthening to flick her forehead. Shia became face up because of the big impact, and the back of her head hit the wall behind her, hard; which result in her squatting with teary eyes. As expected, her shameless character always slips out.

While rubbing the back of her head, Shia muttered, “Somehow I felt something happy happened, but is it just my imagination?” Probably, she unconsciously felt Hajime patting her. However, because he had known she would get carried away if he told her the truth, Hajime decided to ignore her.

Because Shia woke up (although by force), Hajime gently shook Yue to wake her up. Yue “… …Nn u… …Au?”, let out that lovely voice while slowly opening her eyes. Then, with a blank expression she looked upward and confirmed Hajime was there, once again, she rubbed her mouth on Hajime’s shoulder, then she quietly parted from Hajime and straightened her appearance.

“Uu, Yue-san is so cute… … this is how a girl wakes up~, compared to her I was…”

Shia began becoming depressed this time, and Yue looked at her in wonder, only to let out an explanation, “because it was Shia after all.”

“Look, from the beginning you understood the overwhelming difference in battle power (girl power), right? Rather than being depressed, start doing some soul searching.”

“… … What gentleness, you didn’t drop it somewhere?”

“… …? Hajime didn’t drop anything like that.”

“Gusuh, only to Yue-san. Damn.”

Shia stood up after some soul searching. Yue and Hajime were also ready. This time, they prayed that they wouldn’t be returned to the starting point, and so the trio resumed their dungeon conquest.

Once again, because there will be a lot of unpleasant traps and annoying sentences, they cleared their mind and soul.

Then, Hajime and his party reached a room that they had only visited once, even after a week. It was the room with golem knights that made them remember how mad they were when they got returned to the starting point the first time. However, this time the sealed door was opened from the start, and inside was not a room but a passage.

“This is… … it’d be troublesome if they encircle us again. Let’s rush to the open door at once!”

“Nnh!”

“Yes!”

Hajime and his party broke into the golem knights’ room at once. When they approached the center of the room, as expected, ‘gashan gashan,’ the sound of golem knights rushing out from the recesses on both sides of the walls resounded. From the start, they ran forward while kicking and shooting those golem knights; which bought them some time, while Hajime and his party ran faster still, to reach the altar before being caught by the golem knights’ encirclement. Although the golem knights rushed after them, they were unable to catch up to Hajime and his party that had already passed the door. Having successfully escaped, Hajime was grinning.

However, Hajime’s smile vanished in the next moment. This time the golem knights also passed through the door, chasing after them. Also…

“Wha-!? They can run on the ceiling!?”

“… … Surprising”

“Gravity-san please do your work~!”

That’s right, the golem knights that chased them, as if ignoring gravity, were running on the walls and ceiling, giving off ‘gashan gashan,’ sounds of moving heavy armor. Because of this, even

Hajime and his party were surprised by it. Hajime immediately looked at the passage then used “Mineral Appraisal,” but all materials were already known. He didn’t detect any minerals that could neutralize gravity, or any with adhesive nature.

“How did they do that?”

Those were the unintentional mutterings that leaked out from his mouth. And once more he took a peek at the golem knights behind him, becoming even more surprised as he turned around.

One of the golem knights on the ceiling was running while ‘pyon,’ jumping, and like a cannonball it advanced with tremendous momentum toward them while jumping in mid-air.

“W-wha-!? Shitty bastard!”

Hajime let out a surprised voice then fired Donner rapidly. The bullets fired accompanied by flashes, and the golem knight’s helmet and shoulders were destroyed. The golem knight’s headpiece separated from the body, and the large sword and shield were also dropped. However, without falling to the ground, it advanced toward Hajime and his party as is.

“Evade!”

“Nnh.”

“Wakya!”

They avoided the golem knight’s head, body, large sword, and shield that came fast and furiously by jumping and bending their bodies. The wreckage of the golem knight passed Hajime and his party, flew towards the walls and ceiling without reducing its momentum, and then crashed and rolled around on the floor.

“Oioi, isn’t that…”

“Nn… … it looks like it “fell”.”

“Gravity-san is at work, I understand.”

It was just as represented by Yue’s and Shia’s words. Apparently, those golem knights were able to control gravity. Although no one understood why they didn’t use it last time, probably because previously it was a room, they might be only able to use it after the room changed into a passage.

While making that hypothesis, Hajime and his party were interrupted by golem knights that “fell.” Some of them approached while spinning their large swords as if they were pinwheels in a veteran-like manner. Hajime and his party used gunfire and “Rupture” for ranged attacks, while Shia struck those that drew near, and they advanced without stopping.

After a while, Hajime and his party felt a different presence from those knights.

“Muu… … Hajime.”

“Aa, I know. Because this dungeon can reconstruct itself, it must be something like that.”

“W-we are surrounded.”

After falling golem knights, next was the reconstruction to come down. Hajime and his party decided to wait for the platoon to come. The knights came with shields raised and moved gallanty, as if they had become a wall. The golem knights created a two-row formation, where the knight in the back supported the defending knight in front. Perhaps they had learned that with only a single row they’d be crushed with sheer power.

“Tch, how troublesome.”

While clicking his tongue, Hajime put Donner-Schlag back into their holsters. After that, he took out one weapon from “Treasure Box.”

In his hands was a weapon with rectangular shape and 12 rotating barrels, the Rocket & Missile Launcher : Orkan. The rockets themselves were 30 cm in length, each of them had more destructive power than the usual grenade. Using Creation magic,

the warheads were installed with stones that could generate “Lightning-clad,” because these stones constantly generate static electricity, they were cobbled together with combustion powder that’d be ignited by the warhead upon contact.

Hajime was grinning while he fixed Orkan to his side.

“Yue, Shia! Cover your ears! I’ll blow them up!”

“Nn.”

“Ee～ what was that!?”

Shia who saw Orkan’s bizarreness for the first time could only open her eyes wide. Yue was the first to thrust her index fingers into her ears.

Shia’s rabbit ears ‘pinh,’ stood upright; unconcerned, Hajime pulled Orkan’s trigger.

PASHUUU!

Along with that sound, the rocket was launched, leaving trails of sparks behind. It was aimed at the platoon of golem knights that laid in wait, then it hit.

In the next moment a roaring sound came along with a large explosion. The pressure that came from igniting a large amount of compressed combustion powder greatly shook the passage. The golem knights that were in the line of fire and received a direct hit, were violently thrown against the walls on both sides, as well as the ceiling. They were destroyed to the point that they didn't even resemble their original forms. It'd take a fair bit of time for them to be reconstructed.

Hajime and his party jumped over the wreckage of the fallen golem knights at once.

"Rabbit ears were-~, my rabbit ears were-~!!"

While Hajime and his party ran, Shia folded her rabbit ears and held them with both hands in agony with teary eyes. The Rabbitman tribe had… … the most excellent hearing among the demi-human race after all.

"That's why I said to close your ears."

"Ee? What is it? I can't hear you."

"… … truly, a shameless rabbit…"

Although Hajime and Yue looked at Shia with amazed expressions, Shia who was in agony couldn't noticed it.

After dealing with golem knights that had come falling once again, they ran through the passage for five minutes. Finally, they saw the end. Ahead of the passage was a huge and broad room. The road itself was broken, and they could see a square scaffold 10 meters ahead.

“Yue, Shia! Jump!”

Hearing Hajime’s shout, Yue and Shia (who somehow recovered) nodded. At their backs, the golem knights kept coming down. While they tried to intercept, Hajime and his party that kept avoiding them reached the end of the passage and jumped.

The jumping power of Hajime and his party who used body strengthening far outstripped olympic athletes. Hajime and his party easily broke the world record and jumped to the square before them.

But, it was a characteristic of this Great Dungeon that nothing comes out as expected. Somehow, in front of Hajime and his party that jumped, drawing a parabolic arc, ‘shii-,’ the square block began to move.

“Whaat!?”

Hajime raised the shout that he had let out many times in this dungeon. Because the distance they judge was altered, they will fall at this rate. They took a peek below and saw that it was quite deep.

When he prepared to shoot out the anchor, Yue's voice immediately rang out.

“”Soar”!”

Using the updraft from wind magic, Hajime and his party's jump distance extended. Even though it was only for a moment, it was enough. He somehow succeeded catching the edge of the block that was still moving even now. Using the spikes on his artificial arm to secure him in place, Hajime was hanging with Yue and Shia clinging to him.

“N-nice, Yue.”

“As expected of Yue-san!”

“… … Praise me more.”

While unconsciously smiling because they had avoided the fall, Hajime and Shia praised Yue. Yue who had consumed a large amount of magic power was a little tired, but showed a triumphant mood.

However, that peaceful atmosphere was disrupted by the golem knights that came flying. That's right, the golem knights were flying in the air. They probably controlled gravity so that they wouldn't fall. They approached Hajime and his party who were currently hanging, with tremendous momentum.

“kh!? Yue, Shia climb me!”

While issuing that order Hajime took out Donner and rapidly shot at the approaching golem knights. Yue and Shia climbed up Hajime’s body which was still moving along with the block. Then Hajime raised his strength to pull himself onto the block using only one arm. Immediately after, the place where Hajime was previously hanging was pierced with large swords that came hurtling with tremendous velocity. Afterwards, Hajime shoots from overhead the golem knights that were stiffened due to post-skill latency.

“Shit, these guys, I don’t know if it was caused by the gravity control, but their movements and tactics became better.”

“… … Perhaps, the cause is here?”

“Ahaha, what’s with common sense. Isn’t everything floating (…)?”

Just as Shia said, everything in their vicinity was floating.

The place that Hajime and his party had entered was a gigantic spherical room. The diameter itself was more than two kilometers. Inside the room, blocks with all kind of shapes and sizes were floating and ‘shii-,’ moved irregularly. It was a space that completely ignored gravity. However, for some reason Hajime and his party still felt gravity. Perhaps, only specific materials in this room were not restricted to gravity.

Inside this room, golem knights were able to fly around freely. Their falling directions were controlled after all, as they rapidly turned around. If they were living beings, it wouldn't be weird for them to die due to the tremendous G-force. When he thought how their movements and tactics became better as they approached this space, perhaps…

"The one who controls the golems might be here, in this room, I think?"

Hearing Hajime's guess, Yue and Shia also agreed and then stiffened their expressions. No one knew why, but the surrounding golem knights did not attack them. For now, because nothing happened, they observed their surroundings. They didn't know if it was the last destination or if it continued after. However, this room was definitely close to the innermost room, proven by how the golem knights' abilities were improved, and the uniqueness of this room.

Hajime used "Farsight" to investigate the gigantic, spherical space with his eyes. And, in the next moment, Shia's unease filled voice rang out.

"Ruun!"

""!?""

Hajime and Yue, without asking what it was, instantly jumped when they heard Shia's warning. Fortunately a block just passed by several meters ahead of them, allowing them to leave the block

they were previously standing on.

Immediately,

ZUuGAGAGAN!!

A meteorite-like illusion came and it crashed into the block that Hajime and his party were on just a moment ago, blasting it into fine pieces. Meteorite wasn't necessarily the wrong term for it. After all something gigantic made a scorching fall, and with its momentum it destroyed the block, and passed through.

Cold sweat flowed on Hajime's cheeks. He would have received a direct hit from that without Shia's warning. With him being unable to use "Vajra," it would be an instant death. He was also unable to sense it coming. But immediately after Shia's warning, he certainly felt the presence. However, with its falling speed it would be impossible to avoid it when he sensed it coming.

"Shia, you saved us. Thanks."

"… … nn, a big achievement."

"Ehehe, it was good that "Foresight" was activated. Although all of my magic was taken instead…"

Apparently, Shia's special magic, "Foresight," activated faster than Hajime's perception was able to sense it. "Foresight" was able to see the future as a result of Shia's assumed choice if she activated it manually, also, it could activate automatically. Just like this time,

it saw through the big danger accompanied with death that affected her directly or indirectly.

In other words, if they received a direct hit, at least Shia would have died from it. With a new feeling of horror, Hajime looked at the meteor-like thing that had passed them. He peeped below from the edge of the block. And, when he thought something moved below, it suddenly flew up with tremendous momentum. It went above them in no time, and while remaining in place, ‘ginh,’ its eyes shone while glaring at Hajime and his party.

“Oioi, seriously.”

“… … So… … big.”

“It’s got the feeling of the big boss.”

Hajime and his party muttered three different impressions of it. Although Yue’s remark was a little dangerous, it was still at the limit of tolerance… … It should be.

What appeared in front of Hajime and his party was a super big golem knight that floated in mid-air. Although the armor was the same, its length should be around 20 meters. Its right hand was burning as if it was a heat knuckle, and it might be what caused the block from before to be blasted to pieces. In its left hand was a chain that made ‘jhara jhara,’ sounds, equipped with a flail-type Morningstar.

Hajime and his party took their stances as they saw the gigantic golem, and they could hear ‘hyun hyun,’ sounds from the surrounding golem knights that came flying until finally Hajime and his party were surrounded. The golem knights who stood in line, raised their large swords in front of their chests. It was as if they were saluting their king.

Hajime and his party were completely encircled and could feel their tension raised. Silence filled their surroundings, it was as if it was a critical situation. The moment they move, the game that bet their lives (slaughter) would begin. What destroyed the strained mood that was caused by such a premonition was…

… … Was the joke-like greeting from the gigantic golem.

“Yaho~, nice to meet you~, Miledi Raisen that’s loved by everyone is here~”

“””… … Ha?”””

Arifureta: Volume 5 Chapter 8

Raisen Great Dungeon and The Last Trial

“Yaho~, nice to meet you~, Miledi Raisen that’s loved by everyone is here~”

From the gigantic golem equipped with brutal equipment and full body armor and a helmet, whose sharp glint was able to make people freeze, was a random and light greeting. The words that it had said couldn’t be understood, even by Hajime. His mind was somehow trying to escape the reality in front of him. Even Shia and Yue forgot that they were encircled and could only stare blankly with their mouths opened.

Because the trio stiffened, the gigantic golem let out a sullen voice. It was a woman’s voice.

“You know~, because I already gave out a greeting, reply with something already. That’s proper manners, you know? Geez, that’s why youngsters of this generation… … should have more common sense.”

They were words filled with real irritation. Moreover, the gigantic golem was raising its burning right hand and its left hand that held on the thorned iron ball at shoulder height. It was a random and human-like gesture as if it said, “Yare yare daze”, while shrugging its shoulders and shaking its head. But, Hajime and his party were the ones that were truly irritated by it. It was as if they were seeing

those annoying sentences again. Although the one that called itself “Miledi Raisen” might be the one behind those words, that woman should have been dead, she was a human after all.

For the time being, Hajime observed his surroundings.

“I am sorry about that. But, Miledi Raisen should be a human and already dead, right? Moreover, I have never heard of a golem with an ego… … that’s why we are surprised, so please forgive us. After that, please explain who you are. Make it brief.”

“Aree~, this person, even under this situation you’re so conceited.”

There was no need to observe anything at all. Rather, he let out a super straight ball. As expected, because of his unexpected reaction, the gigantic golem that called itself Miledi showed a perplexed expression. However, it immediately recovered, it replied to Hajime and his party with a voice that could simply make one imagine it as someone grinning, if it were human.

“Nn~? Miledi-san is a golem-san from the start you know~ To say I was human…”

“I have read a little about you from Oscar’s notes. It’s perfectly written that you’re a human woman, you know? Rather, I don’t want to hear any foolish talk. I already said to make it brief before. Even if you try to obstruct us, what we need to do is still the same. I will turn you into scrap and move on. That’s why, before you can’t make any more ‘gata gata’ sounds, tell us everything.”

“O, oou, because it was my first conversation after a long time, no matter what you say it makes me dance with joy inside. Rather, did you just say Oscar? Don’t tell me, you’ve conquered O-chan’s dungeon?”

“Aa, if it was Oscar Orcus’s dungeon we already conquered it. Rather, it was us who’s supposed to do the asking. If you won’t talk then we’ll fight, you know? Well, it’s not like we need to know anything. Our only objective is the age of Gods magic after all.”

Hajime turned Donner toward the gigantic golem. Although Yue showed a clarifying face, Shia said “Uwa~, he didn’t shake at all~”, in half-surprise and half-amazement while looking at Hajime.

“… … Age of Gods magic you say, then as expected, is that for god slaying? Is it to slaughter and destroy those shitty bastards? If you have captured O-chan’s dungeon, then you know the situation, right?”

“I already said that it was us who’s supposed to do the asking. What we want is the answer, so answer our inquiry from before.”

“This fellow~ is truly conceited~, well, that’s okay~, umm what was it… … Aa, my identity. Uu~n”

“Make it brief. I don’t need a long explanation like Oscar’s.”

“Ahaha, certainly, O-chan’s speech was long～, and there was too much theory～”

The gigantic golem looked up at the ceiling into a far distance, filled with nostalgia. It was truly a golem with human-like movements. Yue gazed at the gigantic golem with her usual expressionlessness, while Shia was restless because of the surrounding golem knights.

“Un, I will say it briefly as you want. I am certainly Miledi Raisen. All the golem’s wonders can be explained with age of Gods magic! If you want to know more, then magnificently try to defeat me! Well something along those lines.”

“In the end, there is no explanation…”

“Hahaha, that was, before you complete the conquest, you won’t receive any information, right? Without that there would be no meaning behind the dungeons, you know?”

This time, the gigantic golem, Miledi Golem, used her finger as if saying, tsk tsk tsk! Although they didn’t know for sure if Miledi Raisen was inside of it, if they excluded the character then the golem had its own charm. Yue boldly muttered, “… … its only problem is the inside”, having the same impression as Hajime.

Finally, about that inside, they still didn’t understand anything in the end. If it was truly Miledi herself, Hajime guessed it must be

some kind of residual thought. Hajime hazily remembered from his memory that his classmate, Nakamura Eri, was a necromancer; a job that handles residual thoughts. However, with her necromancy a residual thought that carried a clear intent like this couldn't be formed. In other words, it was still in the boundary to assume that the established intent of the deceased inside the golem was made by age of Gods magic.

Anyway, it was not a magic that could be used to move to other worlds that he was looking for. So Hajime who was a little disappointed asked a question to the gigantic golem, no Miledi Golem.

"Your age of Gods magic, is it something related to residual thoughts? If that's so, there is no reason for me to be here."

"Nn～? That look, do you have other purposes to get age of Gods magic? By the way, my age of god magic is not that one～, I was helped by Ra-kun to establish my soul in this body～"

Hajime's objective is only to go back to his own world. Because he doesn't understand anything about souls and thoughts, obtaining an age of the Gods magic that manipulates something like that would be pointless. That said, after he asked about that, Miledi's reply didn't match up to his predictions. Even though he didn't know who Ra-kun was, it was probably one of the "Liberators." That person gave Miledi Golem Miledi's soul before she died and established it inside the golem.

"Then, what is your age of Gods magic? Depending on your answer, we'll return as we are…"

“Nn~ Nn~, do you want to know? Do you really want to know?”

Once again, Miledi asked with a grinning-like voice, and Hajime who was waiting for her reply was irritated by it.

“If you want to know~, answer my question first,”

Only on the last few words in her voice changed. Her frivolous atmosphere up till now vanished, and she carried seriousness instead. Hajime and his party were a little surprised by the change. Hajime asked back without showing that on his expression.

“What is it?”

“What’s your objective? What do you need age of Gods magic for?”

I won’t forgive any falsehood was what her tone implied, even her joking atmosphere totally disappeared when Miledi asked that. That was probably this woman’s true nature. If you think about it, she even challenged the Gods for the sake of the people. That was why she didn’t want to entrust her magic to someone with an unknown purpose. It was different from the will in Orcus’s image recording. No matter if hundreds of years pass by, she intended to keep waiting deep in the dungeon to ascertain the challengers’ purpose. In a way it could be called torture for her. Even her frivolous attitude was a bluff, the real her is someone who has great patience and will, it could be said that she had a sense of responsibility.

Maybe because Yue also thought of her like that, she had been looking at Miledi Golem with a different expression since a while ago. Yue understood well the suffering of someone who was alone in the depths of darkness. That's why, for Miledi who was determined to leave her soul behind in order to stay in the depths of the darkness, she seemed to feel something more than sympathy.

Hajime looked straight at Miledi Golem's glinting eyes and replied without any falsehood.

"My objective is to return to my hometown. I was forced into this world by the ones you call mad Gods. I am looking for age of Gods magic that's capable of transferring people between worlds… … I have no intention of defeating the Gods in your stead. I don't even have the slightest inclination to risk my life for this world."

"… …"

For a while Miledi Golem quietly stared at Hajime, then maybe because she reached something she gave a little nod. Afterwards, she only muttered "I see". And, in the next moment, her serious atmosphere disappeared as if it was an illusion and her frivolity returned.

"Nn~, I see I see. So that's it~, you're from a different world~. Un un. That is problematic for you~ Okay, then it's time for battle! Splendidly defeat me and you will obtain the age of Gods magic!"

"Although your chain of reasoning was so odd that I lost the meaning of it… … just what's with "then it's time". Rather, didn't

you hear my words? If your magic isn't transition magic there will be no meaning, you know? Or are you saying it is transition magic?"

Miledi only, "Nnfufu~", let out an unpleasant laugh, then, "That is… …", answered with a voice filled with too much emphasis as she prolonged her answer. Her appearance resembled Mino**n that tried to inform the Final Answer.

Finally, with his irritation reaching its limit, and because it'd be a battle from now on, Hajime took out Orkan and Miledi shouted the answer she forestalled.

"No~t telling!"

"Die."

Without asking any more questions, Hajime fired the rockets from Orkan. Leaving trails of sparks, the storm of destruction flew toward Miledi Golem and hit.

ZUGAaAAAN!!

The violent sound of explosions resounded and shook the room. Smoke rose from that explosion.

"Did we do it!?"

“… … Shia, that was a flag.”

Shia who let out “first strike for victory!”, with a joyful look was tsukkomi’ed by Yue. The result: it was just as Yue said. From inside the smoke the burning right hand appeared with a ‘bobah,’ sound and dispersed the smoke.

When the smoke cleared up Miledi Golem appeared, with some parts of both of her forearms broken. Miledi Golem picked up the floating blocks that had drawn near, and they were decomposed to become materials for the parts of her arms that were broken.

“Fufu, what a fast preemptive strike~, come, my age of Gods magic might be what you seek after all~, but because I am strong~, work hard so you won’t die~”

While laughing joyfully, Miledi Golem shot out the flail-type Morningstar in her left hand toward Hajime and his party. It wasn’t thrown. The Morningstar just suddenly flew with tremendous velocity without any starting movement. Perhaps, the gravitational force’s direction was adjusted and made it “fall” just like the other golems.

Hajime and his party avoided the Morningstar by jumping onto a nearby floating block. The Morningstar turned the block that Hajime and his party were previously standing on into minute pieces. Then it turned around and returned to Miledi Golem’s hand.

“Let’s do it! Yue, Shia. Let’s destroy Miledi!”

“Nnh!”

“Affirmative!”

Along with Hajime’s shout, inside one of the Seven Great Dungeons; Raisen Great Dungeon, the last fight began.

The golem knights who raised their large swords in a standby state began to move as if signalled by Hajime’s shout. Just like inside the passage before, they turned toward Hajime and his party and rushed out.

Yue took out a water bottle that was clanking with the other bottles and used it to horizontally mow down her enemies. The water that was pressurized to the limit, rather than water cutter it cut apart the golem knights more like a laser.

“Ahaha, you can do it after all～, but, the enemies are 50 infinitely regenerating knights and me, I wonder if you can handle all of us at the same time～”

While saying that with a sarcastic tone, Miledi fired the Morningstar again. Shia made a big jump, and jumped onto the moving pyramid block’s upper part. Hajime didn’t move from his spot and turned Donner toward the Morningstar and fired rapidly.

DOPAaaNh!

There was only one gunshot sound. However, the bullets that fired numbered six. The attacks were accompanied with a flash aimed only at the approaching Morningstar, striking it with tremendous velocity. It was indeed a metal ball with huge mass, there was not much change even after it was hit by the railgun six times at the same time, but its trajectory deviated away from Hajime by a large margin.

At the same time, Shia jumped from the upper part of the block to Miledi's overhead, she brought down Doryukken as she fell.

"I already saw that~"

Along with those words, Miledi Golem suddenly moved to the side at a great velocity. She must be "falling" to the side.

"Kuh, you—!"

With her aim off, Shia gritted her teeth and pulled Doryukken's trigger, then an explosion came out. With the cartridge ejecting from the side, her trajectory was corrected. After spinning three times, a blow that carried significant centrifugal force hit Miledi Golem.

ZUuGAGAN!!

Miledi Golem immediately used her left arm to guard. A tremendous sound of impact came from the left hand. However, as if nothing happened Miledi Golem swiped her left hand horizontally.

“Kyaaaa!!”

“Shia!”

Shia who was hit let out a scream. Somehow she managed to pull Doryukken’s trigger and corrected her pose using its explosive power; additionally, using the recoil she made an emergency landing on the nearby block.

“Hah, you can do it after all. Oi, Yue. Just what kind of training did you make her do?

“… … I only drove her into a corner.”

“… … I see, it was something like polishing her ability to survive to the maximum.”

Hajime used Farsight to confirm Shia who ‘pyon pyon,’ bounced on the blocks to come back, with admiration in his mind. And, on the block Hajime and Yue were on, the golem knights that rushed them was finally could not be held back by Yue alone.

Hajime took out Metherai the Gatling gun from “Treasure Box.” Then, with his back turned to Yue, he unleashed the monster capable of scattering 12,000 deaths per minute.

DOuRURURURURU!!

Its six barrels began rotating as he fired it. While letting out sounds particular to this weapon, a lot of flashes flew straight freely all over the room; while the enemies who met the bullets mid-air were turned into scrap and fell to the bottom. Those that sneaked around to the other side to evade and attack from the blind spot, by a laser of water, were perfectly cut.

More than 40 golem knights fell to the bottom of the room in tragic states in no time. After some time, they would likely finish reconstructing and return to the frontline, but it was good that they won’t be hindrances for a while. That’s right, until the time their boss, Miledi Golem is destroyed.

“Wh-, what was that!? I have never seen nor heard of anything like that!”

Having heard Miledi Golem’s astonished shout, Hajime put Metherai back into “Treasure Box,” then once again he pulled out Donner, and let out a voice that could be heard even by Shia who was at a distance..

“Miledi’s core is at the same place as the heart! Destroy that!”

“W-wh-! How did you know that!?”

Once more, Miledi let out an astonished voice. Surely she didn’t know that Hajime has a magic eye that’s capable of seeing the flow of magic power. Because the position of the core that could be used to defeat the golem was confirmed, Yue and Shia’s eyes became sharp with a glint.

Currently, there were around ten golem knights that still floated. The trio released waves of attacks aimed to hit Miledi’s heart.

Hajime immediately tried to get closer to Miledi Golem by jumping using the floating blocks as footholds. With the current output of the Railgun, it’d be hard to pierce Miledi Golem’s gigantic body and hit the core. That’s why, he decided to shoot at zero distance to destroy the armor, then pull out a grenade.

However, it was not that easy.

When he noticed Miledi Golem’s eyes shine for a moment, blocks were floating from her overhead toward Hajime with tremendous speed.

“!?”

“I never said I can only control the knights～”

Ignoring Miledi's grinning voice, Hajime immediately 'gashun,' operated his artificial arm's gimmick.

DOGANh!!

With a sound that could affect the insides of your stomach, an explosive sound rang out and pressure was generated from the back of the artificial arm that was aimed forward. More specifically, it was the discharge of the powerful shotgun. Although acceleration using electromagnetism couldn't be done, the compression ratio of combustion powder was much higher than in Donner. The recoil was also severe because of it. The trajectory of Hajime's body changed mid-air, while the blocks that came flying were dodged. Afterward, he somehow managed to put his feet on the targeted block.

Naturally, Miledi Golem tried to "drop" Hajime's foothold, but before she was aware, Shia already approached her from behind and she jumped to deliver a strong hit on Miledi Golem's head. First of all, she wanted to destroy the eyes' part on the head that gave off suspicious light.

Miledi Golem who noticed Shia was approaching, made the golem knights target Shia that was in the middle of her jump. Shia was completely defenseless mid-air. At the moment that she was almost cut by the large swords.

"… … I won't let you."

This time, it was Yue that had moved before she was aware of it,

using “Rupture” she cut the golem knights that tried to attack Shia.

“As expected of Yue-san!”

While saying that, with the trouble gone, Shia continued to advance in the air, and she delivered the attack that was made by strengthening her physical ability to the limit.

“Golem won’t lose in terms of power～”

Miledi Golem proved her own words, while turning around she immediately swung her burning right hand toward Shia.

DOoGAGAGAN!!

A tremendous roar resounded when Shia’s Doryukken and Miledi Golem’s heat knuckle collided. The surrounding floating blocks were blown away radially by the ensuing shockwave.

“Damn you!”

Shia who was unable to penetrate Miledi Golem’s fist let out a shout to pull out more of her power. However, just as expected of a golem’s physical strength, Shia was shaken off and blown away by the fist.

“Kyaaa!!”

Shia let out a scream. There was no floating block in the direction she was in. Because she thought Shia would fall at this rate, Yue dashed out from the side and embraced Shia. Using “Soar” for just a moment, they corrected their trajectory and landed on the floating block in front of them.

“Quite a combination you have there~”

With a composed voice, Miledi Golem looked up while Yue and Shia looked down at her. An unexpected voice came out from nearby.

“Right?”

“!?”

Letting out a panicked and surprised voice, Miledi Golem changed the direction of her glance. Before she was aware of him, he had slipped onto her bosom while fixing his location using the anchor and putting his foot into the cracks on the armor, he aimed the large weapon : Schlagen to the heart’s part. A bright red spark gushed out from Schlagen.

“S-since whe—!?”

DOoGAN!!!

Miledi's surprised words were cut off by the roar that came from Schlagen. Having fired a mass of killing intent from zero distance, it blew Miledi Golem away and her chest armor was shattered into tiny fragments. Even if "Lightning-clad" couldn't be used with enough output, the current Schlagen's firepower was the same as Donner's maximum power. Even so, that was enough firepower to destroy metallic armor. Even golem knights' armor could easily be blown apart by the current Donner, so Miledi Golem's armor that's made from the same materials even if it was a little thicker, could be destroyed using Schlagen.

Blown backwards, smoke came from Miledi Golem's chest. Hajime also flew backwards. By shooting the anchor, he turned around mid-air, and with the momentum he landed on a nearby floating block. Then, he observed Miledi Golem's condition.

Yue and Shia also jumped to the floating block near Hajime.

"… … Did we do it?"

"Although there was a response…"

"With this, I want it to end."

Having heard Yue's response, Shia said her wishful thinking. Hajime's expression was subtle. Although Miledi Golem's chest armor was destroyed, without knowing what had happened, nearby floating blocks started to move, and Hajime and his party could

hear a voice that was filled with admiration.

“Wow~ you’re the real deal, that was a close call. If there was no magic power disintegration, that artifact’s real power would be very dangerous you know~, yes, having made this dungeon with great effort, Miledi-chan is a genius!!”

Miledi Golem praised herself. However, her words didn’t enter Hajime’s ears. Hajime’s expression was sharp. That’s because there was jet black armor beneath the wrecked chest armor, and he noticed one thing from that. Hajime remembered that armor’s material.

“Nnu~, did this interest you~”

Miledi Golem noticed Hajime’s gaze, and with a grinning voice she pointed at the jet black armor. With the tone of someone important, “This is you know~”, she tried to explain the armor’s identity, but Hajime continued that with a mutter followed by a vulgar word.

“… … Azanthium huh, bastard.”

Azanthium ore is an ore boasting the trait as the world’s hardest ore that even Hajime use in some of his equipment. A thin coating of this ore is even able to endure Donner’s maximum power. That’s why Schlagen’s attack was unable to scratch it. Hajime drew wrinkles on his forehead because it would be hard to destroy that Azanthium armor.

“Oh my? You knew of this~, rather that’s a given. You have conquered O-kun’s dungeon after all, so it was impossible for you to not know how to use Creation magic~, now come, because you had understood your limit and feel hopelessness, let’s move on to the second round!”

Miledi snatched the materials from the smashed floating blocks, when the surface armor was reconstructed, she started to fiercely charge while firing the Morningstar.

“W-what should we do!? Hajime-san!”

“There is still a way. By any means, seal off her movement!”

“… … Nn, affirmative”

With the condition where they didn’t have enough firepower, Shia who was shaken asked Hajime. Hajime still had his last resort, to use it he issued an order to seal off Miledi Golem’s movement. On the other hand, Yue and Shia let out somewhat relieved expressions and they tried to evade the incoming Morningstar by jumping to the nearby floating blocks. However,

“I won’t let you~”

Along with Miledi Golem’s voice, the floating blocks that became

their footholds started rotating in high speed. With their footholds rotating all of a sudden, Hajime and his party lost their balance. Then, the Morningstar crashed into Hajime and his party with its immense power. Hajime and his party abandoned their footholds that had become fine dust. Hajime was clinging to the chain that passed with 'jhara jhara' sounds. Yue used the fragments of the smashed floating blocks along with "Soar", while Shia was using the recoil from Doryukken's explosion to somehow manage to make an emergency landing on the floating block before her eyes.

Maybe because that was Miledi Golem's aim, she thrusted her heat knuckle towards them.

"Kuu!!"

"Nnh!!"

They avoided the direct hit but were affected by the force of it passing by. Groans of anguish were let out from Yue and Shia's mouth. Even so, as if that were something else, Yue aimed at Miledi Golem's hand and invoked "Rupture", while Shia used Doryukken's gimmick to let out a stake, and with a strike, pierced Miledi Golem's armor, and clung to it.

"Rupture" was able to cut off part of Miledi Golem's right hand, but it couldn't completely sever it, and Yue landed on another floating block with a mortified expression.

On the other hand, Shia who clung to Miledi Golem's left shoulder made a full swing of Doryukken and aimed at Miledi's head. However, Miledi Golem's sudden use of "fall" made Shia lose her balance and she was thrown out in the air.

“Kyaa!”

Shia let out a scream. Over there, Hajime who clung on to the Morningstar’s chain swung himself and using the centrifugal force, he jumped and caught Shia in the air.

“Hajime-san!”

Shia called out Hajime’s name with a voice full of joy. It was the rescue by embracing that she yearned for. Although she was aware of the situation they were in, she immediately felt elated. However, there was Hajime’s quality. Shia was thrown to the crowd of demonic beasts in front of them.

“H-Hajime-san!?”

“Let’s go one more time!”

With a ‘gashun,’ he reloaded a shotshell into his artificial arm and then fired it. Using the recoil, Hajime rotated and threw Shia toward Miledi Golem assisted by the centrifugal force.

“Damn ittt—!”

When she thought her desire had been fulfilled, the next moment she was in a situation where she was suicide attacking the enemy. Letting out a roar of desperation she prepared Doryukken.

Even Miledi felt that Hajime's actions were cold. However, she was still ready to intercept that, she drew back the heat knuckle behind while clenching its fist. And, in the next moment, suddenly a big explosion came from the chain that connected to the Morningstar.

"Wawawah, what-!?"

Miledi let out a surprised voice. The cause of the explosion was a large amount of grenades that Hajime attached to the chain. With tremendous explosive power, the chain was blown from the middle section, while the left arm that was wrapped by it was greatly damaged. Because of the impact, Miledi Golem's stance was broken.

Shia reached her while swinging Doryukken.

"Rhaaaaa!!"

Along with that shout, she pulled the trigger on the handle and the shotshell inside burst out. Doryukken approached Miledi Golem using the momentum created by the acceleration from the impact that was even able to crush air.

Miledi Golem was still occupied by the severe damage on her left arm. Immediately, Doryukken hit her left hand. Without mercy, Doryukken pulverized the brittle left arm up to the shoulder.

With the momentum used to swing Doryukken, Shia floated in mid-air. Miledi Golem wanted to at least take revenge for her left arm, and she released her heat knuckle at Shia.

However, during the time Miledi was concentrating on Shia, a laser of water came forth from her lower side, and it precisely cut the part that was previously only partially cut. Afterwards, with the wound opened up and being cut further, Miledi Golem's right hand was finally cut off.

"… … I did it."

The one who said that with a smile, was of course Yue.

"Kh, you—! Don't get carried away!"

Miledi raised a voice filled with irritation. In that moment, Hajime fired the anchor at the floating block overhead and moved in the air like a pendulum, catching Shia who had fallen. However, it was not a hug, but rather, holding her armpit.

"Hajime-sa~n, aren't you going to give me a hug as a reward? Please read the mood~"

"Don't say it as if I was a KY. You who tries to fulfill your desire in such a situation is the one that should read the mood"

The moment they landed on the nearby floating block, Shia let out

a displeased voice while pouting, then Hajime tsukkomi'd while amazed by that. Miledi who lost both arms somehow didn't summon the surrounding blocks to reconstruct her arms, she only looked at the ceiling while her eyes shone strongly.

Because of a totally bad premonition, Hajime's expression stiffened. It was also supported by Shia's pale expression.

"Hajime-san, Yue-san! Dodge! It'll rain (… …)!"

Hajime guessed Shia's special magic had perhaps triggered. That means, somehow a dangerous situation that could kill someone related to, or Shia herself would occur. He confirmed Yue's location, a little ways behind him, with a cursory glance, then Hajime took a stance to respond to anything that might happen

Immediately, it happened.

The entirety of the room rumbled. The low rumbling of earth resounded, fragments fell from the ceiling. No, they were not fragments. It was the ceiling itself that's falling.

"Kh!? That bastard!"

"Fufufu, it's payback. Although I am incapable of controlling multiple things except the knights, if it's only to make them "fall," then even I can cause hundreds of them to do so~, show me how you surpass this~"

Although there was irritation in Miledi's easygoing words, there was no time to notice it. Because the room's walls were made from numerous blocks, that means the ceiling is also made from numerous blocks. One by one, each of those blocks were gigantic with weight surpassing ten tons. Those things were falling like rain. Cold sweat flowed from Hajime's forehead.

"Ha-Hajime-san!"

"Let's join with Yue!"

Shia let out a trembling voice while being carried, and using the anchor with a pendulum-like movement, they jumped toward Yue's direction. Yue also jumped using the floating blocks as footholds toward them. During that time, Miledi Golem kept looking at the ceiling. Perhaps, just as she said, unlike the golem knights she was only able to control one or two things. Therefore, in order to make them fall, she must concentrate to remove hundreds of those gigantic stones from the ceiling.

Somehow, when Hajime and his party rejoined, hundreds of gigantic stones simultaneously poured down from the sky.

GOGOGOGOGOGOGOGOh!!! GOBAh!!

Blocks were coming from the ceiling, groups of gigantic stones were falling, letting out devastating roars while the room's tremor was stopped. Moreover, she might even be able to adjust the

trajectories because they were specifically aimed at the place where Hajime and his party were. Even Miledi Golem wouldn't commit a double suicide, so it'd be safe to go under her and after he took a glance at that, he dashed out with a tremendous speed along the wall. But, even if he started now, they wouldn't make it.

"Yue! Shia! Hold on tight! Absolutely don't let go!"

"Nnh!"

"Yess!"

As soon as Hajime heard Yue and Shia, he once again took out Orkan from "Treasure Box." Then, he rapidly fired 12 rockets at the oncoming gigantic stones. While leaving trails of sparks, they flew towards the death that was coming overhead, and one by one the rockets that came flying at the gigantic stones caused large explosions.

Their vision was shrouded, the groups of gigantic stones couldn't be seen, and they let out a little smile because of Orkan's attacks. Finally they were able to see some of the ceiling. Hajime put Orkan away then set up Donner-Schlag and fired them at the ceiling. He tried to spread the little path of safety they were in, so he continued to precisely break the fragments from the gigantic stones.

However, Hajime's interception could only go so far. Finally, groups of gigantic stones that fell with great velocity reached Hajime and his party. Hajime confirmed that Yue and Shia were

tightly holding onto him, then moved using his special magic. It was “Light Speed.” Hajime’s world immediately lost its color, he was able to recognize the falling fragments of death one by one.

He passed by the barrage of gigantic stone fragments using the minimum necessary movement. At the same time, he spun the guns in his hands and reloaded them, he used concentrated shots at the unavoidable fragments, changing their trajectories. He couldn’t waste even a comma. Just like the fight with the Guardian of Orcus Great Dungeon, where even with the level of perception expansion from “Light Speed” that he just awoke to, it still wasn’t enough. It was necessary to exceed the limit of concentration!

Hajime further used another special magic. It was “Limit Break.” Hajime’s body was immediately wrapped in red light. But, that immediately disappeared. If it was normal, Hajime’s physical abilities should have raised by three times, but that special magic was nullified by the dungeon’s magic power disintegration. “Limit Break” itself was similar to wearing a reinforced exoskeleton made by magic. It was different for physical ability strengthening which was applied internally. In other words, even with the cancellation of body strengthening, his strengthened and expanded perception effectiveness was not canceled.

Also, to “break” the “limit” wasn’t something gained for free. The load on his body wasn’t something normal. Furthermore, Hajime already strengthened his perception to the limit using “Light Speed.” His body would already have been broken if not for the demonic beasts’ meat that he ate. Actually, because he was still unable to endure it, the capillaries in Hajime’s eyeballs showed, while he let out a little nosebleed.

Yue and Shia were swaying unsteadily when he moved, while

clinging to Hajime who was evading the death that rained with only small movements. He balanced himself on the footholds that swayed and were violently crushed, sometimes he made the falling fragments as his foothold. He sharpened his mind, and now he was able to perceive the cracks on the falling rocks one by one. Having passed the limit, he used the area that normally could not be used by humans to find a way to escape death!

Miledi who observed Hajime and his party from the wall's side, saw that they were immediately swallowed by the groups of gigantic stones. Although they struggled, they weren't able to surpass those large masses as expected, then she deactivated "fall" with a little disappointment.

With their fall stopped, the clusters of gigantic stones were floating along with the blocks, then the scattered ceiling's wreckage rose.

"U~n, as expected, it was impossible~, but if they couldn't do this much, they wouldn't be able to win against those shitty bastards~"

Miledi muttered that while searching for the corpses of Hajime and his party. And, at that time,

"I have no interest in those shitty bastards."

"Eh?"

She heard a familiar voice. The insolent boy that moved at his own

pace, gray haired with an eyepatch and used artifacts she's never seen before. That's right, it was Hajime's voice. Miledi turned her head to the back while letting out a shocked voice tinged with a little joy.

There was, surely, Hajime who stood safe and sound on the floating block with rough breathing, and blood flowing from his eye and nose while glaring at Miledi.

"H-how…"

Because she saw Hajime swallowed by the group of gigantic stones in front of her eyes, Miledi could only unintentionally let out a doubting voice in front of him. Having seen that, Hajime's mouth formed a smile.

"Although it's okay to answer that… … is it okay to only focus on me?"

"Eh?"

Miledi raised the same doubting voice as before. But, that doubt was immediately answered by hits of magic.

""Rupture""

Yue's dignified chant resounded, then lasers of water rushed out

from behind Miledi Golem and hit her back, feet, head, and shoulders. The water cutter tore apart the surface armor of each part.

“No matter how many times you do it, it wont be any different～, I’ll just defeat you after reconstructing my arms.”

“Well, we won’t let you have the time for that.”

To the Miledi Golem that still calmly turned around after receiving Yue’s magic, Hajime used the anchor to approach her in a flash. In his other hand was Schlagen.

“Ahaha, this again? Well, it’s impossible to break my Azanthium armor～”

Miledi was still composed. She thought Hajime who clung to her was trying to shoot the chest part having aimed Schlagen there. She didn’t even try to obstruct him using the floating blocks in the surroundings. Well, that was only natural. After all, Hajime’s weapon was proven to be unable to stand against Miledi Golem’s armor. Therefore, because it already reached this stage, he still chose that kind of attack. Miledi determined that he was just putting up useless resistance without any more plans behind it.

However, her composure proved to be fatal.

“I already know that!”

Sparks came from Schlagen along with Hajime's words, he fired the full-metal jacket-like thing that was accelerated by electromagnetism towards Miledi Golem's chest at zero distance. A great roar and impact were generated while Miledi Golem was blown backward.

However, Hajime didn't withdraw like last time. He kept clinging using the anchor, his artificial arm pushed into the Miledi Golem's chest that was broken, once it was inside he fired the shotshells until they were exhausted. The tremendous impact blew Miledi Golem even further, and she was thrown into the floating block behind her.

"E-even after this, eventually…"

"Yue!"

Ignoring Miledi's words, Hajime called out Yue's name. Following that, Yue jumped and released her magic.

"Be frozen! "Ice Coffin"!"

Just as she wished, she pulled the trigger to activate the magic that's originally used to confine objects inside a coffin of ice. However, this ice magic was a high-ranked water magic. Middle-ranked and above magic should be unusable in this area. Even so, this magic was necessary to restrain Miledi Golem.

The ceiling blocks that she threw along with the back of Miledi Golem were frozen immediately, then the floating block was at a stand still.

“Wh-!? How did high-ranked magic—!?”

Miledi raised a shocked voice. It was a simple story on how Yue was able to use high-ranked ice magic. Just like “Rupture,” by preparing the water beforehand she was able to reduce the consumption of magic power. That’s why beforehand, water was scattered on the blocks that Miledi was thrown to. Also, water was also scattered on the back of the composed Miledi Golem. That was the objective of the previous “Rupture.”

Even so, it still consumed enormous magic power, Yue used up all of the magic power that she stocked inside the magic crystallization stone. Yue evacuated on the nearby floating block while panting.

“You did it, Yue!”

Standing on Miledi Golem’s chest, Hajime took out his last resort from “Treasure Box.” What appeared from the void was a large elongated cylinder with a length of two and a half meters. A lot of mechanisms were installed outside, while inside a jet black stake with a diameter of 20 centimeters was loaded. On the lower side, four sturdy arms were installed, and it began to synchronize with the mechanisms inside Hajime’s artificial arm.

Just like that, Hajime inserted the arms right above the unmoving

Miledi Golem, and fired the anchors that were installed on it's outer casing. Six arms deeply pierced the surface and firmly fixed the large cylinder in place. At the same time, Hajime poured his magic power into it. Then, the large cylinder let out red sparks, the jet black stake that was loaded inside began to strongly rotate.

KIiIIIII!!!

The melody coming from the high-speed rotation echoed. Hajime was grinning, if not for having a golem's body, Miledi's expression would surely seem cramped. This atrocious form was the artificial arm's attachable weapon called "Pile Bunker." Using "Compression Transmutation," four tons were compressed into a stake with a diameter of 20 centimeters and length of 1.2 meters, and its surface was coated with Azanthium ore. It was the heaviest and hardest stake in this world. It was shot out using a large amount of combustion powder that was compressed and electromagnetic acceleration that was set on the upper part of the large cylinder.

"Take it with all your might and die."

Accompanied by those words, as if driving a stake into a vampire, the jet black stake struck Miledi Golem's core.

GOoGAGAGAN!!!

The pile bunker activated accompanied with a terrific impacting sound, the jet black stake pierced through Miledi Golem's absolute defense. The Azanthium armor on the chest was immediately cracked, and the stake buried itself into it without mercy. Because

of the impact, Miledi Golem's body sank and created a radial crack on the floating block. The floating block immediately descended. From Miledi Golem, white smoke was rising from the chest part because of the friction from high-speed rotation.

… … however, the light didn't disappear from Miledi Golem's eyes.

"Ha, hah. Apparently its power is still insufficient. But, well isn't it the real deal? I wonder, did it pierce 3/4 of the armor?"

Somewhat, her voice was stiff, but Miledi still kept her composure. She secretly drenched in cold sweat. Although the pile bunker was a certain kill weapon, because of insufficient electromagnetic acceleration, its real power couldn't be shown. Therefore, it was disappointingly unable to fully penetrate the defense.

However, Hajime's eyes didn't show any resignation. It was as if he already took it into account.

"Do it! Shia!"

Hajime put everything away into "Treasure Box" except the stake, then he quickly jumped away from Miledi Golem's chest.

What appeared instead of him was Shia with rabbit ears blown by the wind and Doryukken in an upper stance, while she fell from far above.

“Kh!?”

Miledi had probably guessed what Shia tried to do. This time, Miledi Golem tried to hurriedly get away. When she realized, with Shia’s current speed, even if she moved the floating block now, she wouldn’t make it in time… … she gave up and stopped moving.

Shia, using the force from the shotshell, brought down a blow with all of her might into the stake.

DOGOoOO!!!

The stake sank further accompanied with a great roar. However, it was still unable to fully penetrate the armor. Shia decided to attack using all of the remaining shotshells, then she pulled the trigger.

DOGONh! DOGONh! DOGONh! DOGONh! DOGONh! DOGONh!

“AaAAAAA!!”

Shia’s shout rang out. She decided to show all of her will and pour it into the Sledgehammer that was her partner. With all of her might and will, she let out all of her power. Together with the attack, the floating block was greatly pushed downwards by the impact.

Finally, with a roar the floating block crashed onto the ground. The jet black stake penetrated the absolute defense of Azanthium with the last attack, and reached Miledi Golem's core. Although it was just the tip, but 'bishih,' the core was cracked along with that sound.

When it crashed into the ground, Shia used Doryukken as the starting point, and with one hand, she somersaulted. Then, with all of the body strengthening power directed to her leg, the kick that carried enough centrifugal force was used to drive in the stake.

Having received Shia's kick, the stake was immediately pushed deeper into the core and expanded the cracks… … until finally it was completely crushed.

The light in Miledi Golem's eyes disappeared. Having confirmed that, Shia gradually loosened her power, and let out a sigh of relief. Immediately, Shia heard landing sounds behind her. There was Hajime and Yue as expected. Shia turned toward the two with a smile that sums up everything. Hajime and Yue also let out smiles that sums up everything.

One of Seven Great Dungeons; Raisen Great Dungeon's last trial was certainly over.

Arifureta: Volume 5 Chapter 9

You did well

Dust drifted in their vicinity, and numerous cracks were carved on the ground. On the floating block that had crashed was a large crater, and on top of that laid a gigantic golem with a jet-black stake sprouting from its chest area.

On top of Miledi Golem, Shia let out, “zehaa zehaa,” gasping breaths while being supported by Doryukken. Hajime narrowed his eyes in admiration, while Yue looked at her with gentle eyes.

“You did it Shia. The ending was filled with great vigor. It made me think better of you, right?”

“… … Nn, you’ve worked hard.”

“Ehehe, thank you very much. But, Hajime-san, it’s okay if you put “I’ve fallen for you” instead, you know?”

“From the beginning, I would never fall for you.”

Even with her exhausted appearance, Hajime and Yue’s praise made Shia feel shy. Actually, until just recently she didn’t think anything about battle. She only single-mindedly wanted to stand

on the same stage as Hajime and Yue and to always be together with them. Those were Shia's wishes. With those deep and strong wishes, Shia faced one of the Seven Great Dungeons' trial with her potential, and it resulted in her delivering the finishing blow.

Even for Hajime, the last scene where Shia delivered the finishing blow was something he had predicted. Because he expected the pile bunker's power to be insufficient, he already had other means to drive it in. However, although the Rabbitman tribe was gentle and not good in combat, Shia never whined, saying "I want to go back", while she fought, but surely she must have felt anxious and scared entering the depths of a Great Dungeon. That's why he thought to leave the finishing blow to Shia.

The result was magnificent. She delivered the last attack with great vigor, it was so splendidly done that it even made Hajime praise her. Shia's desire to become strong surely reached him. Even so, Hajime's feelings did not reach the level Shia wished for. But, her perseverance and will-power certainly made him feel their bonds. That's why Hajime gazed at Shia with gentle eyes.

"Fue? So-somehow… … Hajime-san is looking at me with such gentle eyes… … I-is it a dream?"

"You know… … No, well, although it can't be helped when I think about how you were usually treated…"

Because the way Hajime gazed at her was unbelievable, Shia pinched her own cheek. Although Hajime wanted to complain about her reaction, once he thought of how she was treated until now, he could only think it was the natural reaction.

Yue tokotoko, approached Shia who was still pinching her cheek. Then, Shia's clothes were pulled to make her bend down and her head was patted slowly. Her disordered hair was fixed, slowly and gently.

"U-umm, Yue-san?"

"… … Because Hajime won't pat you, although it's regrettable, I'll do it instead. You did well."

"Y-Yue-sa~n. Uu, huh, I wonder why? Somehow I can't stop crying, fueee."

"… … Good girl, good girl."

At first, Shia was confused by Yue's sudden actions, but when she understood she was being praised, as if the string of tension was cut, Shia began to weep and immediately hugged Yue. As expected, she was trying to endure herself with her first journey suddenly becoming against the Seven Great Dungeons. That's because she was determined to go together with Hajime and Yue. To be praised and acknowledged, she couldn't stop her tears because of the relief.

By the way, Hajime surely wouldn't pat her, as Yue said. Shia was the type that easily got carried away, if Hajime awkwardly patted her it would result in troublesome things like Shia misunderstanding his feelings as love. This time, although Shia would be treated comparatively better by Hajime, there was no

reason for multiple people to have the same feelings as Yue. That was her “special feeling.” More or less, Hajime never considered how Yue would be saddened by that.

Moreover, “Fueee~n”, there was a happy cry from Yue’s chest. It was Shia crying out of relief while being spoiled. That’s why, when Yue who patting and looking at her with gentle eyes was seen… … well, somehow the future could be predicted.

Yue was spoiling Shia while embracing her, and Hajime watched this with an indescribable expression. While that happened to the trio, suddenly, a voice rang out.

“Ummm~, although it’s such a good atmosphere~, it’s about to get dangerous for me, so can I have some of your time~?”

It was a truly familiar voice. Hajime and his party let out “Hah,” then looked at Miledi Golem, unbeknownst to them, the light in her eyes that was previously gone has returned. Immediately, Hajime and his party jumped back to put their distance. Because they were certain that her core was destroyed, they could only take stances with wariness in their minds.

“Wait, wait a sec, it’s okay~. The trial was cleared! It’s your victory! Because there is some power left inside the core’s fragments, I wanted some time to talk~, it’ll only take a few minutes.”

As if to prove those words, Miledi Golem was completely unmoving, while the lights in her eyes parts were repeatedly

blinking. It seemed to disappear at any moment. That's why, it must've been true when she said she only needed a few minutes.

Hajime relaxed his mind and continued to talk to Miledi Golem.

"So? What is it? Undead? To be incapable of reading the mood even after death… … Although it's regrettable for the future "Liberators," maybe I should help you pass on."

"Wa-, stop it~, what's with that obvious harassment. That was completely unpleasant."

"Well? I won't hear anything about killing "those shitty bastards," you know?"

Toward Hajime's authoritative speech, Miledi somehow gave out an atmosphere as if she wryly smiled.

"I won't say that. That's not necessary after all. What I want to talk about… … is more like advice. Even if there is no age of gods magic that you're looking for in the dungeons you visit, try to obtain all of the age of gods magics… … because they are necessary for your wish…"

Maybe because Miledi's power was almost exhausted, her words gradually became blurred and more intermittent. But, without worrying about that, Hajime told her his problem.

“All of them huh… … then tell us the locations of the other dungeons. Because they were lost in legend, I truly don’t know anymore of it.”

“Aa, there is that… … I see, the other dungeons’ locations are unknown… … it’s been a long time after all… … Un, the locations… … the locations are…”

Gradually, Miledi Golem started to lose the power in her voice. Toward her voice that somehow contained sentimentality, Yue and Shia wore serious expressions. After a long time, for her duty, rather for the sake of her wish. To have put her soul inside a vessel was an act that made them stare at her with respect.

Miledi slowly talked about the whereabouts of the remaining Seven Great Dungeons. Inside her words was a place that seemed to surprise them.

“That’s all… … Good luck.”

“… … You’ve become completely modest. What happened to those annoying lines and that infuriating tone?”

Just as Hajime said, the current Miledi gave out an atmosphere as if she had no relation to the Miledi that prepared those annoying sentences inside this dungeon, with a completely different tone, filled with sincerity and seriousness. She had also displayed it before the fight when she wanted to hear Hajime’s objectives. This

was probably her real self. It was as if there was no more need to hide it before she completely disappeared.

“Ahaha, I am sorry~. But… … those shitty bastards… … were truly unpleasant fellows… … they only say unpleasant things… … that’s why, even just a little… … I want you to get accustomed to it…”

“Oi, you. I already said I won’t defeat the Gods. That’s why, don’t say it as if I’ll fight against those guys.”

Toward Hajime’s unpleased voice, Miledi replied with unexpected conviction and seriousness.

“… … You’ll surely fight them. As long as you are you… … For sure… … You’ll, kill those gods.”

“… … I don’t understand what you mean. Well, if they try to obstruct my path then it can’t be helped…”

Hajime was somewhat perplexed. Miledi who had seen his appearance let out a joyful laugh.

“Fufu… … that’s good… … it’s okay as long as you live like that… … your choice… … will surely… … be the best… … for this world…”

Afterwards, Miledi Golem's body was wrapped in a pale light and glowed. As if it became fireflies, the light separated into smaller lights and ascended towards heaven. It was similar to how a dead soul ascends to heaven. A very, very mysterious scene.

During that time, Yue slowly approached Miledi Golem. Then, she stared at those lights.

"What is it?"

Came Miledi's whispery voice. Similarly, Yue whispered words, a present for a great "Liberator" that was about to disappear.

"… … Thanks for your hard work. You did well."

"… …"

Those were words of appreciation. For her alone, a great existence that kept waiting for hope at the bottom of darkness, a small present from the one still alive. Normally, they might be improper words that came from a younger person. But, as expected, those unexpected words were the only ones that came to Yue's mind.

Those words might also be unexpected for Miledi. Without saying anything, her blank surprise could be felt. Before long, Miledi muttered in a soft voice.

“… … Thanks.”

“… … Nn.”

By the way, behind Yue and Miledi who were exchanging words, Hajime spoke with an irritated tone, “That’s enough already, so quickly disappear.”, while Shia who heard that said, “Who’s the one incapable of reading the mood now!? Please just be quiet for now!”, and covered his mouth. Fortunately, the other two didn’t notice, so their solemn atmosphere was preserved.

“… … Well then,… … it’s time… … from now on… … you should freely… … do what you want…”

Those words that were similar to Oscar’s were presented to Hajime and his party, one of the “Liberators,” Miledi, became fleeting lights and disappeared into heaven.

Silence wrapped their vicinity, Yue and Shia followed the trail of lights as it went to heaven while soaked in reverberation.

“… … In the beginning, I thought she was someone with the worst character. But, it was just her trying her best.”

“… … Nn.”

Yue and Shia exchanged those words in the quiet atmosphere.

However, there was a man that didn't think of Miledi like they did, Hajime talked to the two with a fed up expression.

"Haa, isn't it enough? It's about time we moved on. Also, did you really think that fellow's mischievousness a lie? That kind of mischievousness isn't at the level of an act."

"Wait, Hajime-san. To say that about the dead. That's cruel. Hajime-san truly can't read the mood."

"… … Hajime, KY?"

"Yue, even for you… … haa, well, that's okay. But for your information, it's not like I can't read the mood. I just don't want to."

While they were talking, Hajime and his party didn't notice a light shoot out from a corner of the wall. When they noticed, they moved toward it. They jumped onto the floating block on the upper part of the wall, so the trio jumped onto the same block. Then, when they landed, the floating block that served as their foothold shii—, started to move, it carried Hajime and his party toward the shining wall.

"… …"

"Wawah, this thing suddenly moved. How convenient"

“… … Service?”

Because the floating block suddenly transported Hajime and his party, Shia was surprised while Yue tilted her head in doubt. Somehow Hajime wore an unpleased expression. They advanced toward the shining wall in ten seconds and completely stopped five meters in front of it. Following that, the shining wall, as if waiting for that timing, started to lose its radiance. With a suh- sound the part of the wall that was still shining started to split. In its place, a passage with glossy white walls appeared.

The floating block Hajime and his party were on advanced into the passage. Apparently, they were going into Miledi Raisen’s dwelling. After advancing for a while, just like the door leading to Oscar’s dwelling inside Orcus Great Dungeon, there was a wall with the same seven distinct patterns engraved on them. Hajime and his party approached the door and, as if the wall was waiting for that exact timing, the wall slid to the sides and they advanced towards the interior. The floating block was advancing without stopping towards the wall on the other side.

Slipping through from the wall on the other side was…

“Yahhoo, short time no see! It’s Miledi-chan!”

A small Miledi Golem.

“”… …””

“Come on, look. I already knew this might happen.”

Yue and Shia were speechless. Hajime who already expected this showed a fed up expression. Hajime was able to expect this because he saw through that both the frivolous Miledi and the serious Miledi were the real her. Those annoying sentences and unpleasant traps were not at a level a truly serious person could conceive. Also, Miledi chose to leave her own soul to test the challengers herself. That’s why it was impossible for her to pass on after being defeated just once by a challenger. If that truly happened, the last trial would be gone after just one clearing.

Because of that, Hajime expected that Miledi herself wouldn’t disappear even after Miledi Golem was destroyed. His expectations became conviction when the floating block started to move to guide Hajime and his party. After all, Miledi was the only one that could move the floating block.

Toward Yue and Shia who were looking down silently, Miledi talked to them with a very casual tone.

“Aree? Aree? Isn’t the tension too low～? It’s okay to be more surprised, you know～? Ah, is it that you are so surprised that you can’t say anything? If that’s so, then my surprise is a bi～g success ?”

The small Miledi Golem was designed to be more human-like compared to the gigantic one. It had a slender body clad in a milk-white, long robe while wearing a white mask. Its Niko-chan mark was slightly irritating. Along with Miledi’s words that ended with

kira!, a twinkling star, she came in front of Hajime and his party. Even now, Yue and Shia looked down, their expressions hidden behind their bangs. Because he could read the development that might happen next, Hajime took a step back.

It wasn't known if it came from Yue or Shia, but a question was muttered.

"… … Before?"

"Nn~? A while ago? Aa, did you really think I was gone? No way, no~ way! That's impossible~!"

"But, didn't you disappear into the light?"

"Fufufu, isn't that well prepared? That "production (of play)"! Oh my, Miledi-chan truly has talent as an actress! What a frightening woman!"

Mini Miledi's tension rolled up. It shot up in proportion with their annoyance. In front of that Mini Miledi, Yue thrust out her hand while Shia prepared Doryukken. As expected Mini Miledi stopped moving while thinking, "Are? Did I overdo it?"

"U-u~mm…"

Towards Yue and Shia who were swaying as they approached her,

Mini Miledi moved her head kakukaku, in hesitation then said the words she had decided in her mind.

“Tehe, pero?”

[T/N: Head bonk with tongue sticking out to the side, really annoying Japanese gesture.]

“… … Die.”

“Please die.”

“Wa-wait! Please wait! This body is weak! It’ll be truly bad if you destroy it! Please calm down! I will apologize!”

For a while, dotabata, dokanbakih, sounds of destruction and “Iyaa —”, a scream could be heard, Hajime who ignored those sounds was observing the room. The room was white all-over, there was nothing except a magic circle that was carved on the floor in the center of the room. The other one was a door-like thing on one part of the wall, Hajime guessed that Miledi’s dwelling was on the other side of it.

Hajime slowly approached the magic circle then arbitrarily examined it. Mini Miledi saw that and panicked while drawing near Hajime. From behind her, the expressionless vampire princess and rabbit-ears approached while making dododododoh, sound effects.

“You~ it’s not good to examine it without permission. Rather, they are your companions! Please don’t just ignore them, stop them!”

While saying those complaints, Mini Miledi hid behind Hajime and made him into a shield against the devil duo.

“… … Hajime, please move aside, I won’t kill her.”

“Please stand back Hajime-san. I will kill her. Here and now.”

“Surely, I never thought of hearing those materials at this timing. Rather, stop playing around and do it already.”

Hajime gave his advice with a somewhat amazed expression at Shia and Yue’s softness. Behind him, Mini Miledi said, “That’s right, that’s right, do it seriously!,” only to get iron clawed by his artificial arm. He ignored the Niko-chan mark that was distorted into a bitter expression. Just as it is, he put more power and mekimeki, sounds of something cracking came from Mini Miledi’s head.

“It would become an unpleasant design if this keeps up, so hand over the age of gods magic already.”

“Ummm~, did you notice your speech and behavior are villain-lik- [Meki meki meki] Affirmative! I’ll immediately hand it over! That’s why, stop! I truly will break if this keeps up!”

Maybe because their bitterness had decreased having seen Mini Miledi being capable of little more than flailing around, Yue and Shia regained their composure. Mini Miledi who understood that she truly would be destroyed if she kept joking around, finally began to activate the magic circle.

Hajime and his party entered the magic circle. This time, because Miledi herself knew they cleared the trial, there was no need to search their memories like that time in the Orcus Great Dungeon, and the information and how to use the age of gods magic were directly carved into their brains. Although Hajime and Yue who already experienced this didn't show any reaction, Shia who experienced this for the first time bikunh, jumped.

The carving ended after a few seconds, Hajime and his party easily obtained Miledi Raisen's age of gods magic.

"This is… … magic to manipulate gravity as expected."

"That's ri~ght. Miledi-chan's magic is gravity magic. Use it well… … is what I wanted to say, but you and that Usagi-chan don't have the aptitude~ it was at a level that even I was surprised by it!"

"How noisy. I have understood that much."

Just as Mini Miledi said, Hajime and Shia who had the information of gravity magic carved into their brain were unable to fully use it. It's the same case as how Yue is only able to use a little of Creation

magic, it was a matter of aptitude.

“Well, Usagi-chan should be able to use it if it’s only to adjust weight. For you… … because you can use Creation magic, just do something about it yourself. Blonde-chan alone has the aptitude. With training, you can master how to use it.”

Having heard Mini Miledi’s somewhat serious explanation, Hajime could only shrug his shoulders, while Yue was nodding, and Shia was brokenhearted. It was because she was judged to have no aptitude for the age of gods magic that she had finally obtained. She could only use it to adjust her weight. She was truly disappointed. Moreover, it was out of question to make herself heavier, but there was also a problem to make herself lighter. If she was negligent, it would only make her figure bad. Rather, burdened by the demerits… … Shia could only feel depressed.

Having cast a skeptical gaze toward the depressed Shia, Hajime immediately made further demands. There was no need to be reserved at all.

“Oi, Miledi. Pass us the proof already. Then, give me all of your convenient artifacts and all of the unusual materials you have such as the Induction stone.”

“… … You, aren’t your lines completely the same as a robber’s? Are you aware of it?.”

From the distorted Niko-chan mark mask, a glare could be felt, but Hajime ignored that. Mini Miledi pulled out a ring after rustling

her chest pocket, then threw it toward Hajime. Hajime received it with a pashih, sound. Raisen's ring had a design of upper and lower ellipses with a stake piercing them.

Mini Miledi immediately made a large amount of ores appear from empty space. She probably had a "Treasure Box." The ores that were taken out was kept inside of it. Having seen that she obediently took them out, she probably had already decided to hand them over beforehand. That's because Miledi was convinced Hajime would fight those mad gods, that's why she wouldn't mind cooperation of this level.

However, to not be satisfied by this much was Hajime's quality. After putting away all of the minerals inside his own "Treasure Box," Hajime turned cold eyes toward Mini Miledi.

"Oi, isn't that "Treasure Box"? If so, hand that over too. There are probably some artifacts inside."

"O-oi you~. I won't hand over anymore than this. The "Treasure Box" and the other artifacts are necessary to maintain the dungeon."

"As if I care. Hand them over."

"Ah, oi, I said no!"

Because Hajime truly tried to snatch it away, Mini Miledi retreated

with an impatient expression. All of the artifacts that she owns were things necessary for the dungeon. Rather, they were only useful for that, so they were no use for Hajime to have them. Having heard that explanation, Hajime, “Hou hou, I see. Then, hand those over.”, said that demand without any mercy. No matter how it was seen, it was a robbery.

“Ee~i, I already said I won’t hand them! Mou, go back already!”

Currently, toward Hajime that impatiently approached, Mini Miledi turned on her heel with all of her might and ran toward the wall, then elevating the floating block, she moved into the ceiling.

“Don’t escape. For me, I just want to get the rewards for conquering the dungeon. That’s a legitimate demand from me.”

“Having the nerve to say that, please do something about your sense of value! Uu, to make me say something that O-chan usually said…”

“By the way, my sense of value was cultivated inside that O-chan’s dungeon.”

“O-chaa—n!!”

While she continued looking at Hajime with a shocked expression, Yue and Shia who still held a grudge after being toyed with entered the fray, they narrowly encircled Miledi. Although half of it was

because she reaped what she had sown, Miledi felt the other half was her former comrades' fault for making this dungeon.

"Haa~, to have these abnormals as my first challengers… … mou, no more. I will send you outside by force! Don't come again!"

In front of Hajime and his party who seemed to jump out at any time, Mini Miledi grasped the string that unbeknownst to them hung down from the ceiling, then gui, pulled it.

"""?"""

For a moment, Hajime and his party let out expressions wondering what she was doing. But, an unpleasant sound they've already heard before could be heard by their ears.

GAKON!!

"""!?"""

That's right, it was the sound of an activated trap. At the moment the sound rang out, accompanied with a roar, water gushed out of the four walls with tremendous velocity. A large amount of water gushed out like a flash flood, not from the front but diagonally above, and the room was filled in no time with a rapid current. At the same time, the magic circle in the center of the room sunk like an antlion's nest, there was a hole in the center of it. The rapid current rushed toward the hole.

“You! This is—!”

Hajime who had noticed something stiffened for a moment, he instantly wore a distorted expression filled with humiliation.

A white room with a hole in the middle of it, also a large amount of water whirled and flowed into it… … That’s right, this was just like a “toilet”!

“Unpleasant things should be flushed?”

Mini Miledi gave out a wink. Yue immediately tried using magic to jump up. Because there was an age of gods magic circle, there was no magic power disintegration. That’s why, even with only a little amount of magic power left, Yue could use magic to help everyone escape the rapid current.

“So-”

“I won’t let you~!”

However, the moment before Yue said “Soar” to activate the magic, Mini Miledi thrust out her right hand, at the same time an extraordinary pressure attacked Hajime and his party. They sunk inside the rapid current as if being pressed by something gigantic. She was probably using gravity magic to multiply the gravity

several times.

“See ya~, good luck on conquering the other dungeons~.”

“Gopoh… … you, did you think we are filth!? Someday, I’ll surely destroy you!”

“Kehoh… … Unforgivable.”

“Now you’ve done it! Fugah.”

Hajime and his party let out sharp parting remarks, then were swept by the rapid current into the hole. A moment before they entered the hole, only Hajime tried to retaliate by throwing something. Along with Hajime and his party that were flushed into the hole, the water flowed out at the same speed, then the floor returned and the room regained its former form.

“Fuu~, what strong fellows~. Even so, a synergist master just like O-chan huh. Fufu, somehow it feels like destiny. Keep struggling for your wish… … well then, I’ll be busy for a while to repair the dungeon and the golems… … nn? What was, that.”

Even without the ability to sweat, Mini Miledi made a gesture of wiping her forehead. After that, she discovered an object that she was not used to seeing at the edge of her field of vision. A knife was pierced into the wall and a black object hanging from it. “What is it?”, as she approached, having recalled it she finally

realized.

“Heh!? This is, don’t tell me—!?”

A black object, it was Hajime’s handmade grenade. It was the only form of retaliation that he could have done; throwing a knife with a grenade attached, just before being flushed into the hole. Because he had used it many times inside the dungeon, Miledi already judged that it was an explosive, she immediately floated to take refuge in a hurry. Actually, the current Mini Miledi had bad magic power consumption when using gravity magic, she already spent most of it bringing them down. That’s why she was unable to hold down the explosion.

Although Mini Miledi watawata, turned her heels, it was too slow. At the moment Mini Miledi turned her heels, the white room was kah, filled with a flash, and followed by an intense impact.

Inside the dungeon, “Hinyaaa—!!”, a woman’s scream resounded. Afterwards, there was a small golem that was seriously in need of repair, weeping, or there wasn’t, was there…

On the other side, Hajime and his party that got flushed like filth were swept into the tunnel-like place by the rapid current at tremendous speed. It wasn’t a place where you could breathe either, so they could only advance while submerged in the water. Somehow, although unskillfully, they desperately tried to control their bodies so they wouldn’t crash into the wall and lose consciousness.

Then, at that time, in the view of Hajime and his party, many shadows passed them by. Those were fishes. It seemed the place they were swept into was an underground vein that connected to rivers and lakes. However, unlike Hajime and his party who were washed away, the fishes were boldly swimming inside the rapid current and came to pass them by.

Unbeknownst to them, one of the fishes swam beside Shia's face who had stopped her desperation to breathe. Somehow, that fish looked toward Shia.

There were eyes.

The fish. No, the human-faced fish had oldman-like eyes. Because it probably didn't know how to speak, it didn't say anything. In conclusion, Shia met the eyes of the human-faced fish. The old man-like face of the human-faced fish displayed impudence and lethargic feelings, it was reminiscent of the nostalgic Shi-ma**.

Shia who was surprised, opened her eyes wide. She panickly tried to cover her mouth with her hands after unintentionally letting out her breath. However, she was so surprised she didn't avert her gaze. Shia and the old man (fish) continued to advance inside the rapid current while staring at each other.

And, the flow of time that seemed to continue forever between Shia and the old man (fish) was abruptly ended. A voice resounded inside Shia's head.

—- Just what are you looking at.

That was added with a click of the tongue. This time Shia was unable to endure any longer. Inside the water “Bufoa!”, she grandly exhaled. Certainly, the old man (fish) might be a kind of demonic beast. It probably had the special magic similar to “Telepathy.” But, without being able to confirm it, the old man (fish) started to swim through the rapid current and went ahead with surprising agility.

What it left behind was a rabbit-eared girl who lost her power while displaying the whites of her eyes.

* * *

From town to town, a carriage and several horses advanced peacefully on the highway that connected villages with pakka pakka, rhythmical footsteps. Certainly, there were people riding on the horses. There were three men and a woman who were dressed as adventurers. On the carriage, sitting on the coach seat was a 15-16 year old girl and a monster… … a giant shemale.

“Souna-chaa~n, because we’ll reach a spring soon, let’s rest a little there~.”

“Affirmative, Crystabel-san.”

The shemale called Crystabel was the manager of a dress store in Brook town who Yue and Shia were indebted to. Also, the girl that sat beside Crystabel was the inn girl of “Masaka Inn”; Souna

Masaka. Although for some reason her name is always able to surprise anyone, she is only a normal girl who has a lot of curiosity and too much pink elements in her brain.

These two were currently returning to Brook town from a neighboring town escorted by adventurers. Because it could be understood that Crystabel was as strong as an oni, it harvests a lot of clothing materials by itself. To get all of the materials at the same time, it left the town. Souna was taking advantage of it hearing that a relative in the neighboring town was injured, she represented her parents who were unable to leave the inn to deliver a get-well gift. The adventurers originally came from Brook town, having finished their job, they incidentally became their escorts.

There was only one day of travelling left until they returned to Brook town. Crystabel and the others decided to rest at the spring on the side of the highway, at noon.

Crystabel and the others who had arrived at the spring were preparing to have lunch on the spring's levee after letting the horses drink the water. Souna who wanted to get some water approached the side of the spring. Then, the moment she scooped the water by dipping the container in the spring,

GOPOh! GOPOGOPOh GOPANh!!

Those sounds suddenly rang out, then bubbles suddenly started spouting from the center of the spring.

“Kyaa!”

“Souna-chan!”

Souna raised a scream and fell on her butt, Crystabel immediately carried her in one arm and returned to where the adventurers were. Even at that time, the bubbles that spouted out became more intense, until finally a water column with a height more than ten meters appeared.

This spring was commonly known as a resting place along the highway, and this kind of phenomenon had never once been reported. Therefore, Crystabel, Souna, and the adventurers could only open their mouths in surprise while blankly staring at that, without being affected by the rain-like drops of water, they only looked at the huge water column.

Following that,

“Douwaaaaa–!!”

“Nnh—-!!”

“… … … …”

From the water that spouted out without losing momentum, three people… … the screams of two people could be heard as they came

out. Spontaneously “What the-!”, said Crystabel and the others with their eyes popping out. The trio of humans that came out were blown off ten meters above while screaming, and just as it is, they were thrown to the opposite side of Crystabel and the others and DOBONh!, fell while making that sound.

“”””””””… …”””””””””

“Wh-what on earth happen-…”

The adventurers and Crystabel were speechless. Souna’s mutters represented everyone’s feelings.

* * *

“Gehoh, gahoh, ～～kh, that was awful. I will surely destroy that guy next time. Yue, Shia. Are you okay?”

“Kehoh kehoh… … nn, I am okay”

Having somehow managed to get into the water’s surface, Hajime confirmed Yue’s and Shia’s safety after cursing. However, only Yue replied to him.

“Shia? Oi, Shia! Answer me!”

“Shia… … where are you?”

Even as they called out to her, there was no sign of her in the surroundings. Hajime hurriedly dived underwater to search for her. Then, as he thought, Shia had sunk to the bottom. Having lost her consciousness, she was unable to float because of Doryukken's weight.

Hajime took out a compressed super-heavy mineral from "Treasure Box" and used it as a weight replacement to immediately dive, then he carried Shia up.

He went to shore while dragging Shia. Shia was laid upside down, her face was pale with the whites of her eyes showing, while her breathing and pulse stopped. Maybe because she saw something unpleasant, she had lost consciousness with her face looking like it had a cramp.

"Yue, do CPR!"

"… … C-… what?"

"A~, like I said, secure her breathing…"

"???"

Having seen Shia's condition, he told Yue to do CPR, but Yue only had "?" floating overhead. In this world, there was probably no

such thing as CPR. Because there was no wound, drinking the Holy Water wouldn't help, and would just hydrate her even more. Yue was weak at healing magic, she couldn't possibly know any magic that was capable of making Shia let out water or to pinpoint massage her heart.

Although the exact moment when she lost her consciousness wasn't known, there was no time to argue. Hajime, with grim determination performed CPR to the unconscious Shia.

And naturally, well, there was mouth to mouth, Yue who saw that immediately became displeased, but because she understood that was the only way to save Shia, she could only quietly watch. That's right, she only jii and ji-, stared at him.

Hajime tried to ignore Yue's inorganic gaze with all his might and repeatedly performed CPR.

'Geez, when I think back, to be dying right after everything is over… … you're truly a regrettable fellow.'

In his mind, he let out those abusive words, and after doing artificial respiration for who knows how many times, Shia finally vomited water. Hajime turned her sideways so the water wouldn't block the trachea. It was a situation where he completely covered her body.

"Kehoh kehoh… … Hajime-san?"

“Ou, it is Hajime-san. Geez, don’t die because of somethi-!?”

While continuing to display an amazed expression near Shia who was laid down and choking, Hajime showed a somewhat relieved expression. Shia who could only blankly look at Hajime, suddenly, gabacho!, kissed him as she embraced him. It was an unexpected action, so Hajime who was close to her failed to avoid it.

“Nnh!? Nn-!!”

“Amuh, nchu”

Shia held Hajime’s head with both her hands, wrapping her legs on Hajime’s waist to keep a hold on him and without any reservation her tongue invaded his mouth. Hajime was unable to shake off Shia who used her herculean strength to hold him.

To tell the truth, during the many repeated artificial respirations, Shia somehow knew she was kissed by Hajime. Although she was unable to move her body, her consciousness had already returned. It was probably a situation brought by her using body strengthening the moment she drowned.

Having kissed many times, Shia’s feeling-o-meter was blown off. To not let him escape, she completely held Hajime’s body then losing herself, she returned Hajime’s kiss.

On the other side, Yue who saw such a spectacle… … was

perplexed and displeased. Although she was displeased by it, she didn't try to stop it. She whispered, "Only this time, as a reward…", in small mutters. Apparently, she took Shia's feelings into consideration and seemed to allow it as her reward for working hard inside the dungeon.

"Wah wah, what!? What's with this situation!? A-amazingly… … wet, while entangled with each other… … so, so intense… … even though it's outside! H-how abnormal!"

That was the conclusion that came from the excessive delusions of Souna-chan; the inn girl. Following that, "Ara? Certainly you are…", Crystabel tried to remember Yue and Shia while wriggling its body. Then, with flames of envy inside their eyes, the male adventurers desperately tried to control themselves from drawing their swords, while the female adventurer looked at them with cold eyes.

Now, with Shia stuck to him, Hajime lift his body up. Then, he intensely grasped Shia's plump butt.

"Anh!"

Shia unintentionally let out a gasp. In the next moment, without loosening his grasp, Hajime PEIH!, pulled and peeled Shia off then threw her into the spring just like that.

"Ukyaaaa!"

DOPANh!

Looking at Shia being dropped into the spring while screaming with a skeptical gaze, Hajime fixed his hair while breathing roughly.

“Th-there is no time to be careless at all. Attacking right after resuscitation… … even I can’t read that move.”

Towards Shia who was immediately crawling out from the spring like Sadako, Hajime displayed an expression as if he was shivering.

[T/N: Sadako is Japan’s female ghost equivalent of the grudge.]

“Uu~ that was cruel~ even though Hajime-san also did that~.”

“Haa? That was just a life-saving action… … rather, you, were you already conscious that time?”

“U~n, although I could only feel it… … I somehow knew what happened. For me to be kissed by Hajime-san, uhehe.”

“Stop that laugh… … listen, in the end that was a life-saving action, there is no other meaning, you know? Don’t expect anything weird, okay?”

“Is that so? But, a kiss is a kiss. The time for dere will come faster if

this keeps up.”

“Never. Rather, Yue. Help me stop her.”

“… … Only this time… … but, because Shia had worked hard… … No, but…”

“Yue~? Yue-san Ya~y”

Toward Yue who kept looking at an empty space while continuing her murmurs, Hajime was only able to let out a sigh while thinking, “This one is also hopeless.” Then, he looked toward Crystabel and the others that had come near to check on Hajime and his party.

His gaze moved from the adventurers, it stopped for a moment toward Souna. Then when he saw Crystabel, he returned his gaze toward Souna. It seemed he preferred to not see that.

Having been gazed at by Hajime, Souna’s body twitched then shook, and her face immediately blushed.

“So-sorry for the interruption! P-please don’t worry about us and continue!”

Crystabel picked Souna up by the scruff of her neck, who tried to turn her heels after saying those words. Then, they came straight

toward Hajime and his party as it is. Because of the monster approaching them, Hajime tried to pull out Donner, but Shia next to him said, “Ah, manager-san”, with a tone as if they were acquaintances and they continued talking.

As a result, their current location turned out to be one day away from Brook town, Hajime and his party decided to revisit the town. Taking advantage of Crystabel’s carriage, they were spoiled by it. Their wet clothes were changed on the way. While talking about various things, they advanced under the warm sunlight with the horse’s footsteps as the BGM.

Together with a new companion, Hajime conquered the second dungeon. While laying down inside the wagon and watching the sun shining brilliantly, Hajime thought about what might happen on his journey from now on and a smile floated on his face.

Arifureta: Volume 5 Chapter 10

Ai-chan's Bodyguards

Hatayama Aiko, 25 years old. Social studies teacher.

As a teacher she taught specialized knowledge to the students, she also tried to improve their academic performance. She wasn't someone who only gave guidance, but someone exemplary. Surely, those were serious matter for her, even more so, were her "allies"; those who thought of her as the most important person. To put it concretely, she was the adult that the kids could depend on outside of their families.

This was influenced by a big event in her student days, but let's leave it at that. Anyway, as the ally of the students outside of their houses, Aiko's pride as a teacher became the pillar of support that helped her call herself a teacher.

Therefore, Aiko was extremely dissatisfied by their current situation. Suddenly, while she was stunned after being summoned to another world and arbitrarily forced into a fantastic situation. The student with the greatest charisma in class continued the talks instead of her. And then when she noticed her precious students were preparing for a war.

No matter how she tried to persuade them, the decided "flow" easily swept away her opinion, she was unable to stop her students at all.

“That’s why, I will at least protect my students!”. Is what she was determined to do, but with her rare abilities, she was told to settle with being useful with the duties outside of combat (farmland improvement and development). Although she desperately tried to oppose it, she was persuaded by her students. Aiko herself was unable to object to the point of view of the right person in the right place.

She spent every day anxiously thinking about the students who were fighting beyond her reach. Guarded by temple knights of the Church of the Saints and imperial guards of the Herrlicht kingdom, she visited every farm village and undeveloped area, but when she finally completed that work and returned to the royal palace, what awaited her was a certain student’s death.

At that time, Aiko blamed herself over and over for being unable to force herself to stay with them. “After all, aren’t I just being carried away after thinking myself an ideal teacher!?” Something like that. Certainly, Aiko was perplexed because she couldn’t even be certain if something might have changed with her being there. But, this incident gasun, struck Hatayama Aiko’s head as a teacher, in other words it awakened her.

Toward the students who were unable to stand up because of the overwhelming fear of “death,” the church and the kingdom still wished for them to resume their war preparations. Aiko thought, “As if I would let it happen for a second time!”, stood to oppose the church and the nobles of the kingdom. Using her position and abilities as her shield, she shouted out, “Don’t come near my students,” to corner them.

As a result, she somehow managed to gain victory. There were no students who refused to fight. But their hearts wavered because of Aiko's persistence. In addition, her already high popularity was grew further. Although she wouldn't do anything like war, the ironic result was that, at the very least some of the encouraged students appeared to escort Aiko in her duties running all over the place.

"There's no need for you to fight" and "Because the knights are escorting me, I'll be okay", was how she persuaded them to give up, but some of the students stood up and said "We'll protect Ai-chan", filled to the brim with determination. Following that, she was eventually overwhelmed, afterward they followed her around the farmlands, and "I was swept around again. I am such a bad teacher…", while on all fours was still fresh in her mind.

By the way, this time, although the dedicated knights escorting Aiko assisted in persuading the students, somehow it became a situation where the students stubbornly refused to back down. If they asked why they opposed the bodyguards, as a consensus of all the students, they blocked everything with the words:

"As if we can leave Ai-chan to someone we don't know!"

The students' sense of crisis was directed at not thieves and demonic beasts on the road ahead, but rather it was turned towards Aiko's dedicated knights. Their reason was that all of the members were good-looking guys. This was the upper echelons' strategy to tie Aiko's talent to the kingdom and church. In short, it was a honeytrap-thing. One of the students who noticed it informed the other students and "Protect Ai-chan from the good-looking military men corps" was formed.

However, there was a miscalculation made by the students. The so-called hunter becoming the hunted scenario. To prove it, these were the persuasive words that the knights gave the students.

Commander of the temple knights and the bodyguard, David:

“There is no need to worry. I’ll protect Aiko. I won’t let her get even a scratch. Aiko is… … my everything”

Vice-commander of the temple knights, Chase:

“For her sake, I will even throw away my beliefs. I am determined to dedicate everything for Aiko. Don’t you feel relieved even by this much?”

Imperial knight Chris:

“It’s my destiny to meet Aiko-chan. Did you think I’ll let my destined person die?”

Imperial knight Jade:

“… … I swore to risk my life. Not as an imperial knight. But, as a man”

This time, the students thought, “Just what on earth happened!? They all had a change of heart!”, something like that. In other words, at first they thought it was Aiko who would fall into the honey-trap, but after hearing those words they shout, “We won’t hand Ai-chan to unknown people!”, as if they were her parents,

they didn't want to part from Aiko's side.

It should be noted, what happened between Aiko and them… … because it's a long story it'll be omitted, but Aiko's idleness and inborn diligence made a gap. Coupled with her sincerity which permeated her surroundings, they had already become Aiko's believer 'when they noticed,' well something along those lines. When told, it could become an entirely new story… … so a lot happened. A lot of things.

With that said, currently, the students were divided into Kouki's hero group, which continued to train inside the "Orcus Great Dungeon", the stay behind group, and Aiko's bodyguard group.

After that, two months after the messengers of the empire visited Herrlicht kingdom, Aiko and her party that improved and developed farmland were currently using the carriage to go develop a new farmland. Their destination was the lakeside town, Ul.

"Aiko, aren't you tired? There's no need to hold back if you're tired, you know? We'll immediately take a break, okay?"

"No, I am okay. David-san. Rather, didn't we just take a break a while ago? I am not weak after all"

Inside the spacious and large carriage, the commander of Aiko's bodyguards'; David, worriedly talked to Aiko. Aiko's reply was mixed with a wry smile.

“Fufu, commander just can’t stop worrying about Aiko-san. Because a while ago you were exhausted after just a day of travel… … that’s why I am also worried. Make sure to not hold yourself back, okay?”

“I apologize for the inconvenience that time. That was the first time I had traveled by carriage… … but, I am really okay because I’ve become accustomed to it. Thank you very much for your concern. Chase-san”

At first, Aiko displayed disgraceful behavior because she had yet to experience how a carriage moved, she blushed because she was reminded of her past, and thanked the vice-commander of the bodyguards; Chase. Towards the blushing Aiko, Chase covered his mouth with his hand in agony, and tried to casually take Aiko’s hand… … “Gohonh!”, his hand was stopped by a cough and a sharp gaze. The one who stopped him was a schoolgirl, Sonobe Yuka, who sat diagonally in front of Aiko. She was a member of “Protect Ai-chan from good-looking military men corps.” Because they wouldn’t know what might happen if there were only Aiko and good-looking military men inside the carriage, several members also came to board it.

By the way, there were eight people inside the carriage. Outside were knights on the scale of a platoon, they tried to hold back because it was already too late to tsukkomi about how only the commander and vice-commander were allowed to ride the carriage. These good-looking guys had also tried to give some reason or another to ride the carriage. They seemed to not want to be separated from Aiko.

“Oya, oya, I’ve been stared at. To have gathered so many wrinkles on your forehead, wouldn’t it spoil your cute face?”

Chase said that accompanied with an ikemen-smile. It was an attractive smile that could make an ordinary woman inadvertently blush. But, Yuka’s reaction was, “Peh!”, an expression of someone who wanted to spit on him even now.

“Not only Ai-chan sensei, do you also call other women “cute”? Ai-chan-sensei, this person is surely a bad philanderer. Please be careful, okay?”

Yuka believed a guy that’s capable of saying another woman is “cute” in front of his beloved, wasn’t a good guy. These guys also had realize they were used by their employers to honeytrap Aiko. They knew that their appearances were capable to making women’s hearts flutter. Because she knew that, Yuka was irritated by Chase who was able to smile daringly, and she made a small counter.

“S-Sonobe-san. Don’t be that belligerent. Even though you finally called me “sensei,” you still called me “Ai-chan”… … isn’t it okay to just use Aiko-sensei?”

“That won’t do. Ai-chan-sensei is “Ai-chan,” that’s why nothing else will do except Ai-chan-sensei. That’s the consensus of the students”

“Wh-what’s with that, I don’t understand it. Moreover, is it the students’ common view? Is that the way this generation thinks? Work hard me, this is a trial for my dignity and reliability as a

teacher! I must understand how my students think at any cost!”

Toward Ai-chan-sensei who said to herself, “Fight-!”, Yuka and Chase’s awkward interactions, and similar atmosphere became warm and fuzzy. That’s the reason why Aiko’s called “Ai-chan,” but she didn’t notice. Her road to become a dignified teacher was a long one.

Even so, for the reliability part, the students were truly depending on Aiko. Even when seen from an outsider’s point of view, she was the most familiar adult the students had, after all. Her recognition became stronger when she stood up to oppose the leaders of the kingdom and church. Especially toward the students that were brokenhearted because of Hajime’s death, Aiko became their mental support.

As a matter of fact, even for the students who requested to be Aiko’s guards, the desire to simply be near Aiko was half of their reason for doing so. It should be noted that, the members of the Ai-chan’s bodyguards, other than Sonobe Yuka were Sugawara Taeko, Miyazaki Nana, Aikawa Noboru, Kawahara Akira, Tamai Atsushi, and Shimizu Yukitoshi, a total of seven students.

From there, they traveled on carriage for four days.

Good-looking military men tried to approach Aiko, but Aiko, who thought everything they said was for the sake of their employers, just let it pass through her ears. Aiko didn’t notice that they had truly fallen for her. Added with the effect of students glaring at them when they tried to seduce her more than necessary, a heavy mood often came about. But it soon changed into a warm and fuzzy one because of Aiko’s speech and behavior… … and that repeated

until the group finally arrived at the lakeside town, Ul.

After recovering from their travel fatigue, they began to survey Ul's outskirts' farmlands and made their plan of improvement. Although there were a lot of love-comedies with Aiko at the center during those times… … that was also a story for another time.

Finally, they began to reform the farmlands, and recently she got "Goddess of Good Harvest" as her second name that started to spread from Ul town, then once again, a new incident occurred and squeezed Aiko's mind.

One of her students disappeared.

Aiko worked the best she could. All for the sake of her precious students. In the end, what awaited her was an impactful reunion that would end in an undesirable outcome.

Arifureta: Volume 6 Chapter 1

Chapter 51 of the Web Novel.

Once Again, In Brook Town

“Fufuh, your silliness, thoroughly show me how you sticky you get today!”

The crescent moon sometimes hidden by clouds illuminated the dark night. Even now, the face that possessed radiance peeped from above the clouds that was moved by the wind. That light began to illuminate a certain building on the ground. More accurately, a rope hanging from the roof of that building, and what was illuminated was a girl that displayed excellent rappelling skills, just like a special forces from somewhere.

Surusuru, as she descended to the corner of a window in a certain room on the third floor, she turned around. While being upside down. her face peered in from the upper part of the window.

“For today’s sake, I had Crystabel-san teach me her Climbing technique! I never thought of using it at this place, kukuku. Now, what kind of abnormal plays will you do, I will absolutely confirm it!”

“Haa haa,” rough breathing came from the excited girl as she focused on peeping into the room before her. Concealing herself, this girl was none other than Souna-chan; the inn girl of Brook

Town's "Masaka Inn". Bright and energetic, able to talk without hesitation, and working hard all over the place. Even though she couldn't be called beautiful, the inn girl was simply lovely just like a blooming flower on a plain. There was a considerable amount of single men targeting her in this town.

That girl was currently using all the techniques she knew to "peep" on certain guests with all her might. If her expression was seen by the men who fell for her would make them instantly feel as if they'd been disillusioned… … It was as if she was a perverted old man.

"Kuh, it is dark after all. I can't see anything. If only the angle shifted a little more…"

"Like this?"

"That's right, if it's from this angle… … Even so, isn't it too quiet? Even I thought I'd hear more moaning…"

"Isn't it possible to use magic to intercept the sound?"

"Hah!? There is also that move! Kuu, how crafty! But, I won't give up! Even if it's only their silliness, I'll burn it into my eyes…"

Just saying this once more, here was outside the window on the third floor. Even if Souna was an idiot to the limits, she couldn't believe she'd hear a voice from nearby. Souna instantly sweated

like a waterfall, and gigigi, turned around with an awkward movement just like a machine that was forgotten to be oiled. There was…

Hajime standing in the sky like a Niou statue, with a cold smile plastered across his face.

“I-ich not what you think, you know? Dear customer. This is, that’s, umm, right! A regular inn maintenance!”

“Hou～, in the middle of the night?”

“Th-that’s right～. Look, if I don’t do it some time in the middle of the night, such as during the day, the repair work will end up being seen. Because it’s an inn, there will be some backlash, right?”

“I see, isn’t reputation an important thing?”

“Th-that’s right! Reputation is important!”

“By the way, apparently there is a peeping tom in this inn. Do you know something about it?”

“Th-that’s a serious situation! T-to peep, th-that’s unforgivable, right?”

“Aa, just as you said. Isn’t peeping unforgivable?”

“E, ee, it is unforgivable I think…”

Hajime and Souna looked at each others’ faces and “Hahaha”, “Fufufu”, laughed together. However, Hajime’s eyes weren’t laughing, and even though Souna was laughing, she was trembling a little while sweat continued to drop.

“Die.”

“Hii—, I am sor~ry.”

Hajime suddenly reverted to his serious look and iron clawed Souna’s face. Merimeri, sounds came from Hajime’s fingers. Souna who could only flail around in the air, let out a scream and desperately asked for forgiveness. Souna is an ordinary girl. That’s why Hajime adjusted his power to a level that wouldn’t overdo the punishment. If this was her first offense, then he would’ve be more lenient. But the day after he returned from the Raisen Great Dungeon, and every night since they checked into the inn, she kept trying to peep using various methods. That’s why his leniency was fading. By the way, the reason they were still staying at this inn was because the food was delicious.

Hajime could only let out a sigh and carry Souna, who was now only capable of twitching, in his arm. Souna was finally able to let out a relieved sigh when her face was released. But, when she looked down… … there were devils. Even though there were smiles on their faces, they were her parents that looked like devils

whose eyes didn't smile, just like Hajime's.

"Hii!!"

They noticed that Souna had seen them. She was slowly descending while her parents raised their hands to receive her. It was just like an invitation to hell.

"This time, it'll probably be forgiven only after a hundred spankings."

"Iyaaaa—!"

Towards Hajime's words, Souna remembered her punishments up to now, and was screaming. Surely, at breakfast the next day, he'll see Souna rubbing her swelling butt with teary eyes. Every night and every morning, Hajime could only sigh at such spectacles.

* * *

Having handed Souna over to her parents, Hajime returned to his room and collapsed onto his bed.

"… … Thanks for your hard work."

"Welcome home."

The ones who greeted Hajime were of course Yue and Shia. The room was illuminated by moonlight shining in through the windows, and the pair fleeting figures could be seen. The girls sitting on the opposite bed were Yue and also Shia who sat shamelessly. Only wearing negligees, their appearances were somewhat lascivious. Coupled with their beautiful faces, if they were drawn on a painting, it'd be described as a masterpiece even by a second-class writer.

"Ou. Even so, what on earth drives that child… … to even climb down from the roof, that's not normal, right? As expected, no matter how delicious the food, we should search for another inn."

Hajime spoke with an amazed tone. Standing up, Shia laughed and sat on Hajime's bed. Yue also steadily stood up and moved to Hajime's bed, then she put her knees below Hajime's head. As the result, they became lap pillows.

"Surely, our relationship has ignited the flames inside that Souna-chan's girly mind. It can't be helped for her to be curious about us. Isn't that cute."

"… … but, for her to become more and more skillful… … it worries me."

"Yesterday, she used a handmade snorkel tube to hide at the bottom of the bathtub… … When I saw her glaring and sparkling eyes, it made me shiver."

"U~n, certainly, that's bad manners for an inn's daughter… … For

now, it's only towards us but…"

While they chatted about Souna's eccentric behaviors, Shia quietly drew her body near Hajime. She naturally extended her hand, then guided Hajime's hand towards her breast. Shia's face turned crimson, and she was nervous at what might happen from this situation.

Hajime gently grasped Shia's hand back. Kyuh, he put in more power that made Shia's body respond with a twitch. Because she was happy, she also put her power into her grasp. Hajime continued to put more strength into his grasp.

Kyuh… PIKUNh, Gyuh… BIKUNh, GIRIh… BIKUBIKU, MISHIh… GAKUBURU

"Wa-! Hajime-san! It will be crushed! My hand will be crushed!"

MEKyah!

"Hii—! I am sorry, I am really sorry! I just got a little carried away! That's why release it! It'll break! I'm going to break if you do anymore than this!"

"What are you trying to do by casually making a good mood? To begin with, your room is next door. So why are you here?"

Towards her hand that was gripped by Hajime, Shia tried to somehow release it while trembling, but she couldn't release it because of the vise-like grasp.

"Th-that's, I was just wondering~ if I can get into the same bed ☆, something like that. Rather, our relationship is already at the stage where we kiss. It's okay if it's only that much."

"As if. Even though I have said it was a life-saving action."

"Well, from my intuition, Hajime-san has started to become dere! Compared to the beginning, you've become very gentle! Because that is a fact, then… … Guhehe "MEKHOBAKIh" Doon't—! It's going to break—!"

Unable to endure hearing Shia's rude plans, Hajime inadvertently put more power into his grip. Shia whose hand was released, trembled at the edge of the bed while crouching and holding her hand to endure the pain. Ignoring Shia, Hajime turned his glance toward Yue. Yue immediately looked straight at Hajime.

"Rather, Yue. Recently, aren't you too lenient? Did you have a change of heart?"

Yue tilted her head and thought about Hajime's questions. Just as Hajime said, having returned from Raisen's Great Dungeon, Yue's attitude towards Shia become more lenient. Before, when Shia tried to stick to Hajime she'd immediately blow her away without arguing, but recently she didn't say anything about Shia's skinship. Even so, if it was something excessive… … for example when Shia

tried to kiss him, she'd immediately become displeased…

"… … Shia did her best. She'll continue doing that from now on. Because she likes Hajime and me."

"Nn? Well, that's so…"

"… … I also… … don't hate her."

"No matter what, you're actually getting along well. I can understand that just by watching. Nn～"

The main point that Hajime guessed from Yue's few words, Yue was pleased by Shia, but not at the level of thinking of her as someone important.

That was the truth. Inside Raisen's Great Dungeon was magic power disintegration that was even stronger than in the ravine, so Yue was unable to display her full power. It was the same with Hajime. They could guess how much hardship they'd have experienced if it were just the two of them. Surely, Hajime alone would be able to clear it, in exchange, the probability of him using one or two Holy Waters was high. To be able to conquer it without consuming them could be considered as thanks to Shia.

Just a little while ago, Shia was an existence that had no connection to fighting. Rather than being unrelated, it was more like she disliked it. This girl was surely frightened and uneasy, but

she kept following Hajime and Yue without complaining. They went into the hell-like Great Dungeon, and while grinding her teeth, she was finally able to beat it with a splendid result.

She was single-mindedly doing that for the sake of her love towards Hajime, and her friendship toward Yue. Because she wanted to be together with them, Shia had changed herself and advanced ahead with all her might.

Yue of course held jealousy and a desire to monopolize him. Therefore, Shia's feelings towards Hajime were not easily acknowledged. That's why, at first, although it was hard to support it… … towards Shia who's able to jump straight even after being treated cruelly, friendship was spread after so many times, following that it was further proven by how they conquered the Great Dungeon… … that became the tangible proof.

If she thought about it, Yue had no memory of anyone she could call her friend. Before she was sealed, she was busy with studying politics. There was no one who could be her friend on equal footing. In other words, she was alone. That's why, toward Shia who said, "We are comrades~!", straight without being two faced, excluding the parts about Hajime, from the beginning she was unable to hate her.

Because of that, regarding Hajime recently, "Well, if it is Shia then just a little…", she showed her generosity.

"… … Even so."

"Nn?"

Yue looked up at Hajime while continuing her words. Her eyes were bewitching and filled with sincerity, confidence, and resolution. Added to Yue's gleaming smile that also reflected all of the above, she was so lovely, so charming, and made Hajime instinctively hold his breath. As if she was possessing gravity, Hajime was unable to move his glance and could only look at her in admiration. Hajime once again returned the look at Yue.

"… … Hajime's heart is already mine."

"… …"

No matter who else loves Hajime, no matter who else came to be attached to him, the number one, the most important is… … me. There was such a declaration. Yue's declaration of war. A declaration of war toward those they had, and would meet from now on.

Hajime was speechless. He was sucked in by the radiance of her eyes, Yue once again as if entwined by him, caught Hajime's glance. Following that, Hajime's hand touched Yue's cheek, while Yue put her hand over his. The moonlight reflected their shadows on the wall, their shadows slowly became closer. Then, at the moment they almost met…

"Gusuh, umm, can you at least please stop forgetting my existence? It feels so empty and lonely… … gusuh."

Shia was sitting while holding her knees on the corner of the bed; while crying and wiping her tears she watched Hajime and Yue create a world for two people.

It was a truly pitiful appearance, Hajime felt somewhat bad, and Yue was telling her to come closer. “Yue-zaa~n”, while shouting that, Shia dived into Yue’s bosom and sniffled. Shia’s head was gently stroked, and because it felt pleasant she closed her eyes, then started to sleep just like that.

Hajime who saw their appearance could only wryly smile and say,

“Rather than a friend, aren’t you more like a mother?”

“… … I prefer Hajime’s child.”

“… …”

“… … Won’t you be gentler to Shia?”

“… … About that, I’ll do my best.”

“Nn… … I love you”

“… … Ou”

In the end, with Shia on his left side and Yue on his right side, the three of them fell asleep. After this day, Shia who was allowed to be in the same room would dance in ecstasy, and get carried away by repeatedly trying to attack Hajime every night, only to be severely punished by him.

By the way, at the time Shia screamed when her hand was grasped, Souna who heard that further intensified her misunderstanding, curiosity, and her delusions. Then she became an inn girl that possessed high infiltration skills… … but this was another story.

* * *

KARAN, KARAN

Accompanied by the sound of bells, the door of the adventurer's guild: Brook's branch opened. Three silhouettes entered, they were Hajime, Yue, and Shia who had completely become celebrities after several days. Inside the guild's cafe, several adventurers spend their time freely just like usual, but there were some who greeted Hajime and his party by raising a hand when they noticed them. As for the men, they looked at Yue and Shia as usual, then turned their glances filled with envy toward Hajime, but there were no malicious ones here.

They had stayed at Brook town for a week, there were several people who didn't learn and caused a commotion by challenging him to a duel to obtain Yue or Shia during that time. In the past, they were unable to persuade Yue who was known as "Crotch Smasher" because they were frightened by her, as such they tried

to capture Hajime and bury him outside the moat.

Of course, Hajime wouldn't do something as troublesome as that. Finally, "Duel me!", when the line was only on "Duel," he already fired the gun. What shot out was a non-lethal rubber bullet that exploded as it hit the pitiful challenger's head, and made him spin three times, then kiss the ground.

Because of that, in the town, Yue the "Crotch Smasher" and her loved person, the one who was capable of killing his enemy in a blink before the duel even started, Hajime the "Duel Smasher" combination became famous people to be reckoned. Even though they didn't apply a party name to the guild, the name "Smasher Lovers" already spread, and Hajime who discovered their nickname could only look off into the distance for a while, because of this new memory.

By the way, as a side note, Shia who felt her existence become thinner could only shed tears.

"Oya, the three of you are together today?"

Hajime and his party approached the counter, just as usual, aunt… … Catherine was there, and she was the one that greeted them just now. Catherine's voice was filled with surprise because in this one week the ones who came to guild were usually either Hajime alone or Shia and Yue as a pair.

"Aa. We'll leave the town tomorrow, and because we are indebted to you, we came to greet you. Furthermore, we thought of

accepting it if you have any commissions related to our destination”

What he meant by indebted, was how Hajime had borrowed a guild’s room for free. Because he finally gained Gravity magic, he wanted to experiment: combining it with Creation magic, that’s why he needed a spacious room. Catherine who happened to hear about it offered the use of a guild room for free.

It should be noted that Yue and Shia trained to use gravity magic on the town’s outskirts.

“I see. So you’re going to leave. That’ll make me lonely. It’s been lively since you came back here after all~”

“Please give me a break. There is a pervert in the inn, there is also a pervert in the dress store, there are also those perverts who start to prostate when Yue and Shia walk in town and stalker perverts who call them “Onee-sama,” there were also idiots who challenged me to duels… … there were no decent fellows at all. Of all the guys I met, 70% are perverts and 20% are idiots… … just what’s wrong with this town”

All of the complaints that Hajime said while scowling were the truth. Let alone Souna, everytime Hajime met Crystabel, she always licked her lips while looking at him like a carnivore, he already forgot how many times he felt chills.

Moreover, there were three major factions created inside Brook town, they tried to compete with each other every day. One was

the “We want to be stepped on by Yue-chan corps”, the other was the “We want to be Shia-chan’s slaves corps,” and the last one was the “We want to be onee-sama’s siblings corps”. Respectively, they literally hold those as their wishes, and it seems they competed on which side would be the majority.

Hajime and his party could only spurt out their drinks because those names were the opinion of the masses. Suddenly there were people inside the town prostrating to Yue saying “Please step on us!” It made her shiver. It was not known how extreme their thought processes were to be like that for Shia. The demi-human race should have been under discrimination, so the way they wanted to become her slaves was a full chance for tsukkomi, but she immediately refused them because it was unpleasant to think deeply about it. The last was a group of only women, maybe because they saw him as an obstruction to Yue and Shia, they mainly tried to eliminate Hajime. Once, “The harmful and parasitic pest to Onee-sama! I’ll remove his ballssss—!!”, a girl screamed that while thrusting a knife toward him in one hand.

Because it’d be troublesome to kill a girl inside town after all, Hajime only left that girl naked in a tortoise shell-like bondage (because he had no knowledge about it) situation, after hanging her on the highest building, and leaving after sticking on a piece of paper that read, “I’ll kill you next time.” Because of the indifferent content in the paper he left behind, the girls’ extreme actions became more hidden, and that’s a good thing.

Hajime who recalled those events could only frown, while Catherine let out a bitter smile.

“Now, now, the lively part is the truth.”

“Right, it sure is.”

“Then, where are you going?”

“Fhu-ren”

Even though they talked in that manner, Catherine was working diligently. Immediately, she started searching whether there was a request related to Fhu-ren.

Fhu-ren was a neutral commercial city. Hajime and his party’s next destination was “Guryuen Great Desert”, where one of the Seven Great Dungeons; “Guryu-en Volcanic Mountain”, resided. Therefore, they must go toward the west of the continent, and on the way was the “Neutral Commercial City Fhu-ren”, so they wanted to drop by the continent’s number one commercial city. It should be noted that after “Guryu-en Volcanic Mountain”, their next destination was further west of the Great Desert, the Great Dungeon that had sunk into the seabed; “Meljine Seabed Ruin”.

“U～n, oh my. I found something good. A request to escort a merchant company. There’s a vacancy for one person… … How is it? Are you going to accept?”

Hajime confirmed the contents of the commission he received from Catherine. Certainly, the content was a request to escort a merchant company. It was a medium-scale merchant company, and it seemed to request 15 people as the escorts. Because Yue and Shia were not adventurers, it was perfect for Hajime.

“Is it OK to take my companions along?”

“Aa, no problem. Although there would be complaints if there are too many people, but there are people hired to carry the luggage, and there are also adventurers who brought their slaves along. Furthermore, Yue-chan and Shia-chan are also influential people. To have another two excellent adventurers in addition when hiring a person. There’s no reason to refuse.”

“I see, nn~, what should we do?”

Hajime who was a little hesitant, looked back at Yue and Shia to ask for their opinions. Truthfully, he thought of accepting the request if it had something to do with delivering packages. If it had been only Hajime and his party, they could have used the Magic-Driven vehicle and arrived at Fhu-ren much sooner than if they had to use a carriage. It would be too troublesome to match the pace of the others in an escort mission.

“… … No need to travel in a rush.”

“That’s right~, sometimes it may be good to go with other adventurers. We might be able to learn the know-how from the veteran adventurers, right?”

“… … That’s true. Since we aren’t in a hurry, sometimes it might be good…”

Having heard their opinions, Hajime was, “Fumu”, and told Catherine that he accepted the request. It was just as Yue had said,

it would take a lot of time to conquer the Seven Great Dungeons. There's no telling what kind of mistake they might make if they tried to rush it. That's why the know-how peculiar to adventurers would likely be useful in their future travels, as Shia had said.

"Here you go. I'll notify the client, so please go to the front gate tomorrow, first thing in the morning."

"Roger."

After she confirmed that Hajime received the application form, Catherine turned her eyes toward Yue and Shia who were behind him.

"You must keep yourself healthy, okay? Whenever this child makes you cry, please come back here. I'll beat him for you."

"… … Nn, we are indebted to you. Thanks."

"Yes, Catherine-san. Thank you very much for taking care of us!"

Catherine's kind-filled words made Yue and Shia smile. Shia was especially happy. She seemed to have forgotten that she was of the demi-human race, ever since she arrived at this town. Of course, there were different strokes for different blokes. Not all of them were friendly in regards to Shia, but with Catherine at the top, there were Souna, Crystabel, and some people like her fans, who didn't discriminate against her, even though she was a demi-

human. It was not known whether that was because of the locality or the people's nature or the flow of this town, but for Shia, this was a warm place, almost like her hometown in the Sea of Trees.

"You too, don't you let these good girls cry, okay? I'll punish you if you don't value them as the most important, alright?"

"… … Geez, what a meddlesome person. I'll do that even without you telling me."

Hajime replied to Catherine's words with a wry smile. Catherine held out a letter towards Hajime. With a doubtful expression, Hajime received the letter.

"This is?"

"You're carrying various problems in your arms after all. It is an apology for all the trouble caused by the people of this town. When you arrive at another town's guild and get into trouble, show this letter to the person in-charge. It might prove to be useful."

Catherine perfectly added a wink, and Hajime's cheeks inadvertently cramped. "For a letter to be able to influence the person in-charge, just who on earth are you?", his doubt could be seen in his expression.

"Oh my, is there a need to investigate me? A good woman is someone that holds secrets, after all."

“… … Haa, un’stood. I will gladly take it.”

“It’s good to be obedient! Although a lot of things might happen, please don’t die.”

Catherine was a staff of the guild in a remote countryside town, and held a lot of mysteries. She sent Hajime and his party off with a charming smile that contained attractiveness.

Afterwards, Hajime and his party drew near Crystabel’s place. Although Hajime refused to come along, he could only reluctantly come because of Yue and Shia… … but, the moment it heard that they wanted to leave town, Crystabel became a huge monster, and tried to attack Hajime, since this was her (Crystabel’s) last chance. Hajime, who was so scared, used the oscillation fracture to bury it. Although Yue and Shia were able to desperately stop the traumatic event… … The details will be omitted.

When she heard it was their last night, Souna finally managed to trespass into the bathroom with a dignified demeanor. That action was followed by her charging into their room, then her parents, who were completely angered by her, tied her with genuine tortoise shell bondage all night long. The event where she was hung in front of the inn would be omitted. The reason why her parents knew how to tie the tortoise shell bondage will also be omitted.

The next morning.

With pleasant memories of Brook's townspeople, Hajime and his party arrived at the front of the gate, moved towards the merchant company's facilitator and other adventurers who accepted the escort request. Apparently they were the last ones to arrive. When the facilitator-like person and the 14 adventurers looked at the incoming Hajime and his party, they caused a commotion at once.

"O-Oi, don't tell me the remaining three are the "Sma-Love"!?

"It's true! Although it makes me happy and frightened at the same time!"

"Look at my hands. They haven't stopped trembling since a while ago, you know?"

"Wait, isn't it because you're drunk?"

There were those who were happy with Yue and Shia's appearance, some hid their groin with both hands while teary-eyed, and one with trembling hands who got tsukkomi'ed by his companion, various reactions. Hajime approached them with a very displeased expression, then the facilitator-like person called out to him.

"Are you the last escorts?"

"Aa, this is the application."

Hajime showed the application that he took out of his chest pocket.

After confirming it, the male facilitator nodded in consent and began to introduce himself.

“My name is Mottou Junker. I am the leader of this merchant company. Although your rank is still blue, I heard you’re excellent adventurers from Catherine-san. I expect you to escort us along the way.”

“… … Motto(more) Yunker ? … … It must be difficult to be the leader of a merchant company… …”

[T/N: Yunker is a Japanese formulated energy and health supplement.]

It was a name that reminded him of a certain health tonic from Japan, and Hajime’s eyes were filled with sympathy. Mottou, who was unable to understand why Hajime looked at him with such eyes, only inclined his neck and replied with, “Well, it was difficult but I’ve become accustomed to it,” as if he was wryly smiling..

“Well, I won’t betray your expectations. I am Hajime. Here are Yue and Shia.”

“That’s reassuring… … By the way, this person from the Rabbitman tribe… … Won’t you sell her? I can only pay a moderate price though.”

Mottou glanced at Shia while appraising her. She was a beautiful girl of the Rabbitman tribe who wasn’t blue-haired like the normal Rabbitman tribe member, but possessed gray hair instead. As a

merchant's nature, he couldn't help but lay his hands on such a rare commodity. He judged her as a slave from her collar, then immediately proposed negotiation to Hajime; the owner. Surely he must be an excellent merchant.

Having received the glance, Shia, "Ugh," groaned unpleasantly and hid behind Hajime. Yue looked at Mottou with a severe look. The popular perception of a Rabbitman tribe outside the Sea of Trees was a slave, that's why it was natural to offer trade negotiations for such an unusual slave. There was no reason to blame Mottou.

"Hoo, she seems fairly attached… … somehow, she also seems to be cherished. Then, I will give you some discounts, how about it?"

"Well, since you seem to be an excellent merchant… … shouldn't you already know the answer?"

Although Mottou, who had seen Shia's appearance, was interested and offered a more appealing proposal, Hajime's reply was simple. Nevertheless, Mottou felt he should not let go of this chance to negotiate with Hajime, since it will surely bring forth large profit that will only increase thanks to Shia's charm. That's why, he tried to give out more bargaining chips to lengthen their conversation.

However, Hajime had read his intentions. Though they were simple words, he voiced them to Mottou with an unwavering will.

"Even if it was god who wanted her, I still wouldn't let her go… … Won't you understand with this much?"

“… … … … Ee, I understand. It can’t be helped. I’ll withdraw here. However, if you ever change your mind, by all means please visit my Junker company. Well then, it’s almost time to depart. For the details on escorting, please ask the leader over there.”

Hajime’s words were actually dangerous ones. If it was done unskillfully, his words would have branded him as a heretic by the Church of the Saints. As a side note, the demon race believes in a different god, they worshipped different gods than the strongest god in history; “Ehito”, but they didn’t directly try to fight the Church of the Saints. Since Hajime didn’t drastically alter his words, therefore, Mottou understood that Hajime, from the bottom of his heart, refused to let Shia go.

Hajime watched as Mottou dejectedly returned to his merchant company, then he noticed the surroundings become noisy again.

“Wow… … For the sake of a woman, to even say that much… … It numbed me!”

“As expected of Duel Smasher. He won’t forgive anyone who puts their hands on his woman… … fuh, what a man.”

“That’s nice~, I also wanted someone to say something like that to me at least once.”

“Wait, you, aren’t you a man? Who would, say someth—, sorry, I am sorry, so sto— Ah——!!”

Having heard the happy conversations of his amused escort companions, Hajime could only hold his head in his hands due to the headache. All of the fellows from Brook town were idiots as expected. While he thought that, 'Munyuu', he could feel something soft on his back, furthermore Hajime was embraced closely by the arms that came from behind him.

Hajime turned his head over his shoulder, and saw a close-up of Shia's face as she rested her chin on his shoulder. Her face completely dyed red, and because she was truly happy, her expression loosened.

"… … Listen, there was no special meaning to it, so don't misunderstand, okay?"

"Ufufufu, I know~, ufufufu~"

Although Hajime explained that, in the end it was akin to not abandoning a relative, and not because "she is his woman", like the surrounding people noisily described. His explanation was not transmitted to Shia. It was because the man she fell for had declared that "Even if it's god, I won't let her go." No matter what his real intentions were by declaring that, a pleasant thing is pleasant.

Even though those words were to quickly break off the negotiation, in a lot of ways it was "overkill," and Hajime could only feel regret. Yue tokotoko, went to Hajime's side, then kuikui, she pulled Hajime's sleeve.

“? What is it, Yue?”

“Nn… … Don’t worry about it, because that was cool.”

“… … Thanks for the consolation.”

Having sympathized with Hajime’s feelings, Yue tried to comfort him, and Hajime gently stroked her cheeks while letting out words of gratitude. Yue closed her eyes as if she was pleased by it.

In front of the front gate early in the morning, inside a crowd of people, with a beautiful rabbit-eared girl that looked so happy attached to his back, and another beautiful blonde girl with crimson eyes in his right hand, was Nagumo Hajime.

The ladies of the merchant company looked at them with lukewarm expressions, while the men looked at the spectacle with dead-fish eyes. Toward these annoying gazes and words that pierced Hajime, surely he just reaped what he had sown.

Arifureta: Volume 6 Chapter 2

Chapter 52 of the Web Novel.

Adventurer-like Work

Using carriages, the distance between Brook Town and the Neutral Commercial City; Fhu-ren, was six days of travel.

They moved before sunrise and prepared to camp before sunset. This has already repeated for three days. Hajime and his party were three days away from Fhu-ren. Only half the travel distance remained. So far no incidents had occurred during their journey. Even though Hajime and his party were in charge of the rear, it was truly peaceful.

Even today, nothing special happened as they prepared to camp. Regarding meals, the adventurers were eating by themselves. They had to eat while minding their surroundings, that's why, as escorts they couldn't settle down when eating together. It also seemed to be the rule to eat on their own. Additionally, when on a mission, the adventurers only eat cruel, simple meals. In a way, preparing tasty meals would only increase their luggage, and would disturb them in emergency situations. Because of that, it became a theory that after they've arrived at a town they would eat tasty meals until their stomachs were full, as their reward.

That story was something Hajime and his party heard from the adventurers when they ate meals on the second day. Hajime and his party had prepared warm bread soaked in luxurious mock stew to eat.

“Gah—, good! It is truly delicious~, just as expected of Shia-chan! Mou, I don’t care if you’re a demi-human anymore, so will you be my wife?”

“Gluck gluck, gulp, puhah, bastard, don’t just run your mouth! Shia-chan is my wife!”

“Hah, just what is a small dirty pig-like man like you trying to say? Know your place. By the way Shia-chan, how about a meal with me after we arrive at the town? Of course, it’ll be my treat.”

“Th-Then, I’ll take Yue-chan! Yue-chan, have a meal with me!”

“Yue-chan’s spoon… … Haa, haa.”

The adventurers kept eating the mock stew made by Shia, saying it was delicious. On the first day, these guys were eating dried meat with things similar to camping goods when, Hajime and his party started to cook next to them, using ingredients and tableware taken out from “Treasure Box”, just as usual. The adventurers were attracted by the delicious drifting aromas. Looking around, they saw Hajime and his party eating the hot meal while blowing on it, nearby. It became a situation where all of the other adventurers stared at them with blood-shot eyes and drooling mouths. Shia who felt that they were truly pitiful proposed to share their meals, resulting in the current situation.

In the beginning, even in front of these starving dogs, Hajime

continued to calmly eat his meal. Naturally, he didn't intend to share at all. However, because Shia took over the job of preparing the meals when they camp, he had to rely on her to make delicious meals. It was not like Hajime and Yue were incapable of cooking anything, but the taste would be flat. Hajime was only capable of making manly dishes while Yue was inexperienced, being a former noble. That's why, it was not an easy thing for Hajime to refuse Shia's, who was able to cook delicious meals, proposal to share.

From then on, although at first the adventurers that crowded like hyena during meals were grateful, they started to get carried away and jokingly tried to persuade Shia and Yue.

Toward the adventurers who made such a ruckus, Hajime silently used "Pressure". Although their bodies should have been warmed up by the hot mock stew, the adventurers immediately felt the chill and could only stand still with pale expressions. Hajime swallowed the meat inside his mouth and glanced at the mock stew while slowly letting out a whisper. Even so his voice could be clearly heard by everyone.

"So? Having filled your belly, who's the guy that wants to be thrown?"

"""""""I am sorry for getting carried away."""""""""

The adventurers apologized while prostrating in splendid harmony and synchronization. Although these guys were senior and veteran adventurers compared to Hajime, they had no dignity at all. Even though there was also the "Pressure" that Hajime used, it wasn't like they would go against Hajime, because they knew what happened in Brook town.

“Mou, Hajime-san. Since it’s finally time for a meal, a little ruckus is fine. A-Also, no matter what they say, I-I am Hajime-san’s, you know?”

“I never cared about that.”

“Hau!?”

Although Shia tried to casually appeal to Hajime while feeling shy, Hajime cut off her words with a single phrase.

“… … Hajime.”

“Nn?… … What is it, Yue?”

Because of Yue’s criticizing glance, Hajime flinched a little. Yue pointed her forefinger and said, “… … bad!”. In short, it was about his promise from before to be nicer to Shia. Hajime, who didn’t harbor love for Shia even now, thought it was enough to treat her as a relative… … however it seemed that was an out for Yue.

“Hajime-san! If you keep that attitude, I won’t give you the “well-done” skewered meat!”

Following that, recently Shia was not as easily discouraged. She

didn't even twitch at Hajime's tsun-remark. Even if she received the shock, she immediately revived and repeated her strong and positive approach.

"… … Like I said, how did you know that mate-… … no, it's nothing. I understand, so quickly hand over the meat."

"Fufu, do you want to eat it? Th-Then, a~n"

"… …"

While blushing, Shia presented the well-done skewered meat in front of Hajime's mouth. He seemed to really want to eat it. That's why Hajime took a peek at Yue. Yue readily stood by his side with skewered meat at hand. Probably, she would follow after Shia's "A~n".

While feeling the adventurers' gazes, Hajime let out a sigh then opened his mouth toward Shia. Shia's expression was dyed in happiness.

"A~n."

"… …"

Hajime bit then chewed the presented meat in silence. Shia's expression was in pure bliss while she looked at Hajime. Then, this time another skewered meat was presented from his other side.

“… … A~n.”

“… …”

He once again took a bite. Silently chewed it. Again, he took a bite when Shia from his other side, “A~n”. He bit again when Yue said “A~n”.

Their subjectivity aside, the voices of the men’s hearts who had objectively seen this spectacle were splendidly unified. In their minds, “We beseech you, please just explode already!!”. They could only use formal words in their minds because they were clearly shown that they couldn’t do anything in face of Hajime’s power .

Two days had passed since then. The distance was only one more day of travel, finally someone appeared to inelegantly obstruct their travel and to assault them.

Shia was the first to notice it. Her rabbit ears, piko piko, moved while pointing toward the forest beside the highway, her unconcerned expression suddenly tightened and she warned the others.

“Incoming enemies! They number more than 100! They’ll come from the forest!”

When they heard her warning, the tension between the adventurers immediately increased. The highway that they were currently

advanced on was not known for the danger from the adjacent forest. After all, it was the only route to the one Neutral Commercial City in the continent. The highway was safe, was what was guaranteed. That's why, although there were stories of encountering demonic beasts, they were only 20, at most. Even if there were a lot of them, 40 was the limit.

"Shit, more than 100 you say? Recently, I haven't heard stories of assault. are they saving up their power for this time's sake? Damn, even though I had investigated about accidents along the highway!"

The leader of the escorts, Galitima, was cursing with a bitter expression. The escorts of the merchant company numbered 15. If Yue and Shia were included, they became 17 people. Considering the number of people, it'd be difficult to flawlessly defend the merchant company. It was simply because they were overwhelmed in number.

By the way, for them to calculate Shia as a combat potential despite knowing the Rabbitman tribe's gentle nature was because there was a time when Shia lost her temper by the extreme actions of the "We want to be Shia-chan's slaves corps". She blew off those perverts at once, that became well-known to adventurers and made them awe.

The moment Galitima started thinking of letting the majority of the escorts stay and at least making the merchant company escape, a proposal's voice rang out and interrupted his thinking.

"If you're perplexed, should we kill them?"

“Eh?”

It was said with a light-hearted tone, as if he was just going to go for a little shopping. The unbelievable proposal came from none other than Hajime. Galitima was able to grasp the significance of Hajime’s proposal, then spontaneously asked back with a stupid voice.

“Like I said, shall we annihilate them?”

“W-Well, that’s certainly, because it’ll be difficult to flawlessly defend the merchant company if this keeps up… … umm, can you do it? Although there are no strong demonic beasts around here, their numbers are…”

“There is no problem with the numbers. It’ll end soon. With Yue, that is.”

Hajime said that and immediately put his hand on Yue’s shoulder who moved beside him. Yue looked particularly eager, and as if it would be very easy work for her, she replied with “Nn…”.

Galitima hesitated a little. At least he had heard the rumors that Yue was a user of rare magic. For argument’s sake, even if she couldn’t completely annihilate them, from the attitude of Hajime and his party they should be able to cut down a reasonable number. That’s why, rather than letting the merchant company escape ahead using their various combat potential, he steadily thought of another strategy.

“I understand. I’ll entrust the first strike to Yue. Even if you can’t completely annihilate them, it’ll be no problem as long as their numbers considerably decrease. Then, we only need to decrease them further with our magic, and beat the last of them directly. Everyone, you understand!?”

“”””Affirmative!”””””

The other adventurers replied to Galitima’s decision with voices filled with spirit. Apparently, it seemed they couldn’t believe Yue was able to annihilate them alone. Hajime thought in his mind, “There is no need to worry that much～”, but because it was not common sense for magic-users to be capable of annihilating more than a hundred of demonic beasts, he felt their judgement couldn’t be helped as he shrugged his shoulders.

The adventurers took a united line in front of the merchant company. Although tension hung in the air, their faces were resolute. There was no remaining joking atmosphere, like the one during meal time. On the way, even though they had heard various stories from the veteran adventurers, only by seeing their current appearance, indeed, they were able to nod and acknowledge them as veterans. The people of the merchant company were frightened when they heard the large number of demonic beasts, now their faces peeped in from the shadows of the carriages.

Hajime and his party were on the roof of the merchant company’s carriage.

“Yue, for now, start chanting. If not, it’ll become troublesome.”

“… … Chant… … chant… …?”

“… … Did you not know any?”

“… … Don’t worry, there’s no problem.”

“Well, that material… … It’s nothing.”

“Contact in 10 seconds～”

Because it’d be troublesome if others inquired about it, Hajime told Yue to use chants, but Yue who originally had no need to chant was only able to float “?” above her head. Even so, it would be good as long as she made them assume she was chanting by whispering, although there shouldn’t be any big problems, her reply somehow made Hajime anxious.

While he thought of that, Shia’s report rang out. Yue, suh, turned and hung her right hand toward the forest, then her chanting voice began to permeate.

“You are the one who brought bright red light into this perpetual darkness, crush the prison of old, the one who met face on as an equal, using the power of the strongest fragment, together with him, become the light capable of swallowing heaven, “Thunder Dragon””

With the end of Yue's chant, she pulled the magic's trigger. At that moment, a dragon made of thunder appeared from the dark cloud just like in her chant. Its appearance was reminiscent of a snake just like an oriental dragon.

"Wh-What's that…"

It wasn't known who muttered that. Even with the crowd of demonic beasts in front of their eyes, everyone's gazes were fixated at the sky towards the bizarre thunder dragon that let out blue electrical discharge. Even those who were well-versed in magic in the rear, could only open and close their mouths towards the magic they've never seen nor heard before.

Then, as if it was no one's ally. The demonic beasts that had come with killing intent for their prey from the forest, came to a halt between the merchant company and the forest, having been glared at by the huge thunder dragon, it was as if they were frogs that were stiffened by a snake's glare.

Following that, as if it was heaven's judgement, Yue flicked her slender and beautiful fingers, causing the thunder dragon opened its jaws that were even able to swallow heaven and attacked the demonic beasts.

GOoGAaAAA!!!

"Uwah!?"

“Dowaaa!?”

“Kyaaaaa!?”

The thunder dragon let out a tremendous roar from its huge opened mouth, and some demonic beasts were voluntarily jumping into the opened jaws. Then, they were eliminated by the jaws of thunder and disappeared without any resistance.

Furthermore, as Yue commanded, the thunder dragon coiled around the demonic beasts to encircle them. The demonic beasts that were in the middle of escaping penetrated that wall of thunder and turned into dust before their eyes. Once again, above the demonic beasts that had lost their escape route, the thunder dragon opened its jaws with a thundering roar, and the demonic beasts jumped into it as if they chose to die. Without any time to suffer the pain, their flesh turning into dust coupled with the majestic appearance of the dragon gave off a solemn atmosphere. Having swallowed all of the demonic beasts, the thunder dragon let out a thundering roar for the last time then disappeared.

Every one of the adventurers that were in formation and the merchant company, because of the flashes along with thundering sounds, and followed by a severe earthquake were inadvertently screaming and crouching. Finally, the fear of a life-threatening attack and the impact left them, and when they opened their eyes slightly to see what happened ahead… … there was nothing at all. There was only the ground, scorched in a coil-shape, it was proof that the unreal spectacle just now had truly occurred.

“… … Nn, I overdid it”

“Oioi, that magic, even I know nothing about it…”

“It is a Yue-san original, right? It seems to be a combination of magic that’s used in the stories of dragons from Hajime-san as a reference.”

“To have made something like this when I shut myself inside the guild… … Rather, Yue, the chant just now…”

“Nn… … A song of meeting and the future.”

Yue looked at Hajime with expressionlessness that gave off an, “How about that!”, atmosphere. She was probably proud of it because it was something she made herself. Hajime quietly used his hand to stroke Yue’s hair gently while letting out a wry smile. Having allowed her to finish the chant to avoid trouble, although it was completely meaningless, his caution disappeared once he saw Yue boasting about herself.

That was Yue’s original magic; “Thunder Dragon”. It’s a compound magic using the high-ranked magic; “Thunder Hammer” that creates a dark cloud then drops a huge amount of lightning, and Gravity magic. The lightning that originally just falls down was arbitrarily controlled using Gravity magic. To purposely make it form like a dragon from Hajime’s story was something made by magic using Yue’s sense. This thunder dragon was filled with gravity magic in the mouth’s parts, that’s why objects would be pulled toward it when its jaws were opened. This is why the demonic beasts looked like they voluntarily jumped toward it. Comparing its magic power, it was at the highest level even among high-ranked magic, that’s why just by looking at Yue’s expression one could see that was the gem of her pride.

And, the adventurers who looked dumbfoundedly at the scorched ground began to regain their senses. Following that, they vigorously turned around to look at Hajime and his party, then started to make a commotion.

“Oioioioioi, what was that? What was, THAT!”

“A-A strange beast was… … from the sky… … from the sky… … ah, it’s a dream.”

“Hehe, I, once we arrive at the town, I am going to marry.”

“I know how shaken you’re, but calm down. Remember that you don’t have a lover, not even a girlfriend.”

“It can be made by magic! It’s not even strange to make a strange beast like that! That’s why I am not wrong!”

“Well, there is no magic related with the life and death cycle, you know? That’s why this situation is abnormal, okay?”

“What!? Bastard, are you saying Yue-chan is abnormal!? Aan!?”

“Everyone, calm down! Listen, Yue-chan is a goddess, that’ll explain everything!”

“”””Indeed!”””””

Maybe because Yue’s magic left too much of an impact, the adventurers became a little broken. That couldn’t be helped. After all, there was no existing magic that could take the shape of living things. Furthermore, that was even impossible to be used by the magic-users that were employed by the country. It could be said the thunder dropping magic; “Thunder Hammer”, was only usable by ultra first-class magic-users.

Inside the broken adventurers that shouted, “All hail Yue-sama!”, something along that line was the sole sane person; the leader Galitima, who could only sigh after looking at his comrades and approached Hajime and his party.

“Haa, first of all, thanks. Thanks to Yue-chan, we were able to get through with zero damage.”

“We are co-workers now. There’s no need to thank us. Right?”

“… … Nn, I am only doing my job.”

“Haha, I see… … so, that is. What was that just now?”

Galitima asked without being able to hide his bewilderment.

“… … Original.”

“O-Original? Do you mean a magic you created yourself? High-ranked magic, no, is that a highest-ranked magic?”

“… … I didn’t create it. It is a compound magic.”

“Compound magic? But, what on earth combines to make that…”

“… … That’s a secret”

“Kh… … That’s, well, it should be. No adventurers will simply reveal their trump card after all…”

Accompanied with a profound sigh, Galitima gave up the pursuit. He seemed to be sensitive to the tacit rule of veteran adventurers. While he shrugged his shoulders, he turned his attention to the broken comrades. “They would give birth to a new religion called the “Yue faith” if this keeps up, that’s why Galitima must work hard”, that’s what Hajime thought as a man.

While receiving gazes from everyone in the merchant company that were mixed with awe and respect, their group resumed their travels.

* * *

Since the time Yue removed the guts of every merchant company's people and adventurers, she didn't have anything to do at all, and their group finally arrived at the Neutral Commercial City; Fhu-ren.

There were six reception desks in Fhu-ren's eastern gate, the goods that were brought would be checked there. Hajime and his party were queueing in one of the rows. It would take a while until their turn.

On the carriage's roof, Mottou approached as Hajime laid down and rest his head on Yue's lap pillow, while being attended by Shia. It seemed there was something he wanted to say. Mottou looked toward Hajime with a somewhat amazed look, then Hajime lightly nodded and jumped down from the roof.

"Geez, you're so bold. Don't you notice the surroundings' eyes?"

Just as Mottou said, the surrounding eyes were the usual and familiar eyes that contained jealousy and envy toward Hajime, followed by eyes that are filled with wonder and hate toward Yue and Shia. In addition, currently the gazes that appraised Shia were increasing. As expected of a big city's entrance gate. In the place where various men gathered, there were not only those who simply looked at Yue and Shia with dirty-minds but also those who looked at them as profit.

"Well, although they're annoying, I can't do anything about it. So, it's useless to worry about it"

Hajime said that while shrugging his shoulders and Mottou could only put on a wry smile.

“There’ll be more trouble once you enter Fhu-ren. As expected, to sell her…”

Although Mottou tried to casually offer a trade for Shia, “Didn’t that conversation already end?”, was what was expressed by Hajime’s silence, and he could only raise a hand as a pose for giving up.

“You aren’t calling me for such talk, right? What business do you want?”

“Well, it is something like that. I’m offering a trade negotiation. It is about the artifacts that you carry. Will you sell those? When we arrive at my company, under the notary witness, I’ll pay the amount that can make someone live his whole life without working. Your artifacts, especially “Treasure Box” are something that merchants will desperately try to obtain after all.”

Along with the word “desperately,” Mottou’s unsmiling eyes were perfectly expressing “even if I have to kill.” It was because “Treasure Box” would be able to solve the problem of cheaply and securely mass transportation goods, that always became a concern in merchants’ heads. That’s why it was understandable.

When he saw various things taken out from the “Treasure Box” while camping, Mottou’s expression was as if someone who had wandered around for tens of days in the desert finally found an

oasis while on the verge of dying. Because he persistently tried to negotiate, Hajime gave out slight bloodthirst and maybe because of his intuition as a merchant told him a warning, he withdrew dejectedly.

However, he was unable to give up after all. In front of Donner-Schlag, he was somehow able to approach Hajime and proposed another negotiation.

“I’ll say it again and again, I won’t sell any of it. Just give up.”

“But, those artifacts are too useful for an individual to carry. Isn’t it more reasonable for them to be used by someone who knows their value? If not, it’ll be much more troublesome… … for example, those girls wil—!?”

Mottou, for a little, took a peek toward Shia and Yue on the roof with a mad and threatening look and at that moment, gochih, something cold and hard was pressed on his forehead. That was accompanied with a sublime bloodthirst. No one in their surroundings noticed it. One of the reasons was because they were in the shadow of the carriage and also because Hajime had pinpointed his bloodthirst toward him.

“That, can I think of that as a declaration of war?”

That was said in a quiet voice. However, that voice that was as cold as ice made Mottou stiffen and the eyes of Hajime that peered into his eyes were just like thick darkness. Mottou’s whole body was drenched in cold sweat and he desperately let out his voice.

“Th-that’s wrong. Somehow… … because, guh… … I wouldn’t… … be able to hide about you… … that’s why, I said those… … words. That was all… … uh”

Just as Mottou said, Hajime didn’t intend to seriously hide his artifacts and their ability. Because he had considered it a little to avoid troublesome things, there was the case of Yue’s chant, but if it was reversed, if it was more than “a little,” he didn’t intend to hide it. Hajime had decided “to not hold back” against this world. He would mow all of his enemies down. He had the resolution to do that.

“I see, let’s just leave it at that.”

Having said that, Hajime put away Donner and dispersed his bloodthirst. Mottou crumbled on the spot. While drenched in sweat, he panted.

“Well, it’s up to you on what you want to do. For example, even if you spread that to others, and those people took action, then I wouldn’t care about it. However, if you became an enemy that tried to obstruct me… … Do you think you can survive? I don’t care if it involves the country or even the world. I’ll just sink everything into a sea of blood.”

“… … Haa haa, indeed. It will be an unprofitable business…”

Although he was still pale-faced, Mottou who was capable of firmly

replying, was an excellent merchant. Even from the interactions with the other merchant company members, he seemed to be quite adored. Normally, it would be impossible for him to take such a firm posture even now. The things that charmed and drove him mad were Hajime's artifacts.

"Well, this time I'll overlook it. But, there won't be a next time, okay?"

"… … For the love of god. It is me who has become senile. For me to kick the butt of a dragon in front of my eyes…"

"Kick the butt of a dragon" is a proverb of this world, it referred to the Ryuujin race and dragons. They boasted their defensive power as an impregnable defense because of their whole body covered by scales, excluding their eyes and mouth, the butt hole that wasn't covered by scales was their only weak point. Because of their high defense, as they were deep-sleepers, they wouldn't awaken once they fell asleep, but they would wake up at once, once their butt that was their weak point received stimulus, and became enraged like raging fires. A long time ago, it was not known why that was done, but the fool was completely crushed. From that, it became the meaning of someone who is foolish enough to purposely disturb someone that was harmless as long as they weren't disturbed.

By the way, the Ryuujin race was assumed to have perished more than 500 years ago. Although the reason was uncertain, these guys own a characteristic magic called "Dragon Form" that made them between the boundary of a person and demonic beast, there are various opinions such as they were turned into exclusion because of discrimination and they were weeded out by the gods as an incomplete race.

“Now that you mention it, Yue’s magic from back then was imitating the dragon. Although I will apologize if that was truly a dragon, but it’s good that no one knows anything about it. After all I also never heard anything about the Ryuujin race. Well, I think it’ll be okay because it looks more like a snake than a dragon.”

Mottou who somehow recovered, managed to stand up and he advised Hajime while tidying his clothes. He was a somewhat bold person. Although he was going to be killed just now, to be able to casually talk to Hajime meant his nerve wasn’t average.

“Is that so?”

“Ee, they are incomplete beings between people and demonic beasts. Nevertheless, they are frighteningly strong. In addition, they are infidels who don’t believe in any gods. That’s why, I can only nod that they are an odd existence for the church’s authoritarian.”

“I see. Rather, you’re completely okay with it. Are you also one of those infidels?”

“I have a god I believe in, the one where the power is not held by “people”. People are “customers” after all.”

“… … Somehow, I can relate with what you just said. Must be a born merchant, you that is. Having seen it, I can only nod at your recklessness.”

Having said that, towards Hajime that fiddled with the ring on his hand, Mottou showed a mixed expression of apology and pride, truly a complex expression. His merchant-like attitude from just now could no longer be seen. Hajime's bloodthirst was like having bathed in cold water for him.

"Although I have committed a blunder, if you have a demand, please come to my company. You're different from the usual adventurers after all. Because I want connections with such a peculiar person like you, I'll give you some discount."

"… … Really, what a firm business spirit."

While being looked at by Hajime with an amazed glance, after saying, "Well then, please excuse me", Mottou turned his heels and returned to the front.

Yue and Shia, even now, no, gathered even stronger gazes. If you chased Mottou's back, immediately there were merchant-like people who were talking while pointing at Yue and Shia. Although it was supposed to be a relaxing trip toward Fhu-ren, Hajime could only think that more troubles were waiting ahead.

Arifureta: Volume 6 Chapter 3

Chapter 53 of the Web Novel.

Adventurers Guild, Fhu-ren Branch

Neutral Commercial City Fhu-ren

20 meters in height, the wall enclosed one of the continent's Neutral Commercial Cities with a length of 200 kilometers. All kinds of businesses and keen competitions happened in this city every day, there were people who successfully realized their dreams, and there were also a lot of people who became penniless and left dejectedly. It could be said it was the number one city in the continent with the amount of people that came to sightsee, and those who came for business.

Because it was so huge, Fhu-ren was divided into four areas. The Central Ward where the facilities related to various procedures in the city gathered, Sightseeing Ward where amusement facilities were concentrated, Craftsman Ward where weapons and armor, also various furnitures were sold directly, and Commercial Ward where all kinds of stores and businesses lined up. There was a main street that stretched to the east, west, south, and north from the Central Ward, it seemed to be common sense to have numerous stores the closer ones to the middle part. The places that were far from the main street and central ward were places for black dealings, in other words, there were a lot of black market-like shops. In those areas, sometimes there were unexpected things appearing, and those who were accustomed to rough stuff like adventurers and mercenaries visit this place.

That story was something Hajime and his party heard while they were eating light meals in the cafe inside the adventurer's guild : Fhu-ren's branch. The one who told them was a woman whose job was a guide. Because this city was huge, there was a lot of demand for guides, so it became a special occupation with a social standing. Although there were a lot of guide stores, they all got high ratings because they improved their services to gain more customers every day.

Hajime and his party came to the adventurer's guild with the application form that had received the seal of proof after separating from Mottou's merchant company. Following that, because they didn't know the location of the inns and shops, they tried to get the guidebook from the adventurer's guild, that's how they came to know about the guide's existence.

Currently, after they paid the woman guide who introduced herself as Rishee, they were hearing the basic information of this city while having light meals.

"That's why, it is recommended to search for an inn in Sightseeing Ward. Although there are inns in Central Ward, it has become a tendency for the workers to nap there, that's why there are less services compared to Sightseeing ward."

"I see, then we will obediently look for an inn in Sightseeing Ward. Where's the recommendation?"

"It depends on what Mr. Customer demands. There are various kinds of inns, after all."

“That’s true. Okay, I won’t complain as long as the meals are delicious and they have a bath. There is no need to consider the location. Also, a place with a clear accountability should be good.”

Rishee heard Hajime’s requests with a smile. Toward the first two requests she nodded with “Un un”, she seemed to have immediately listed all of the recommended inns inside of her mind. However, towards Hajime’s next words, she could only let out “Nn?”, while inclining her neck.

“Umm～, an accountable place?”

“Aa, for example, assume I was pulled into a fight where I was the obvious victim, so I don’t want to take responsibility of the damage inside the inn. I want to stay at a good inn, and I have a lot of equipment, so it’ll be a hassle to compensate that.”

“Uu～m, I think you won’t be involved that often, but…”

Hajime could only smile wryly toward the perplexed Rishee.

“Well, if it were ordinary people it’ll be like that, but we stand out, after all. It seems a lot of loose guys will be at Sightseeing Ward, and merchants with firm spirits that will force their ways will likely appear. Well, in the end it’s only “if possible”. If that’s too hard then there’s no need to consider it.”

Because of Hajime’s words, Rishee looked at Yue and Shia who sat

at Hajime's sides while focusing on eating their light meals. Then, she nodded in consent. Certainly, these two beautiful girls stood out. Even now, they gathered considerable gazes from the surroundings. Especially Shia who came from the Rabbitman tribe. Although it's a crime to put a hand on other's slaves, it couldn't be said there would be no merchants that tried to persistently negotiate nor loose and reckless guys.

"Then, how about an inn with strict guards? There are lots of inns like that, and I can introduce you to a good one…"

"Aa, that's okay. However, the guys that are blinded by desires will sometimes appear. So, it should be considered first that I am going to physically persuade them because guards are not absolute."

"Ph-Physical persuasion… … I see, that's why you asked for accountability."

Rishee completely understood Hajime's intent, so the words "if possible" Hajime said seemed to hurt her soul as a guide, then she accepted his requests and said, "Please leave it to me", with a motivated expression. Following that, she turned her gaze toward Yue and Shia, then asked for their demands. It was a point where she tried to answer every customers' needs as much as possible, surely this came from the guide store she belongs to.

"… … A big bath is good, however for a mixed bath, reservations are essential."

"Umm, I want one with a huge bed."

After thinking for a sec, Yue and Shia said each of their requests. Even though they were called requests, if Yue's term was combined with Shia's, she could see clearly their intentions. Having guessed that, Rishee said "I accept it, so please leave it to me", with an acknowledging and clarifying face, but her cheeks slightly reddened. Immediately, she alternated her glances between Hajime, Yue, and Shia and that resulted in her cheeks blushing further.

By the way, the men who hung around in the nearby tables were staring at Hajime as if saying "If only a person can be killed by a stare!", but because he was already accustomed to it, Hajime just let it go through his head as usual.

From there, they heard the stories of the other wards, then Hajime and his party felt an unexpected strong gaze. It was especially aimed at Shia and Yue, it was the rudest of all, a sticky gaze that stuck to them. Because it was too late for Yue and Shia to mind that gaze, they could only knit their eyebrows because of the unpleasant stare.

Hajime tried to take a peek toward the source of the gaze and… … there was a pig. With a fat body that easily surpassed 100 kilograms, an oily face, along with a pig snout and sticky blond-hair attached on its head. If it were only its appearance, it could be seen wearing good clothing even from a distance. That pigman was the one who stared at Yue and Shia with eyes completely mudded with desire.

While Hajime thought, "It'll be a hassle", the pigman moved his body heavily and while shaking he quickly approached Hajime and

his party. Apparently, there was no time for them to escape. Hajime never thought of running away, though.

Maybe because Rishee also noticed his unrest, or maybe because that pigman stood out, when the pigman arrived with an arrogant attitude, she forgot to smile and “Geh!”, raised an indescribable voice in bad taste.

The pigman soon arrived at the side of the table Hajime and his party were, then looked at Yue and Shia with a smile in his eyes, and when he saw Shia’s collar he narrowed his eyes unpleasantly. Following that, he finally looked at Hajime, who he never looked at until now, and as if he finally noticed him, he showed a gesture and let out a one-sided demand with an arrogant attitude.

“O-Oi, brat. I-I’ll give you a million ruta. H-Hand over that rabbit. That blonde too, I’ll make her my concubine. C-Come with me.”

Having said those words while slightly stuttering and coupled with kii kii sounds, the pigman tried to touch Yue. It seemed Yue was already his inside his mind. At that moment, a violent killing intent poured down. The faces of people in the surrounding tables turned pale as they fell from their chairs, and they began to desperately back away from Hajime.

Well, the pigman who received the killing intent directly was… … “Hii!?”, let out a pathetic scream and fell on his butt, then he retreated while the place between his groins began to wet.

If Hajime let out his true killing intent, he might instantly lose

consciousness, and because that'd be meaningless he put enough consideration into it.

"Yue, Shia, let's go. Let's change the location."

Because a dirty liquid leaked, Hajime stood from his seat then called Yue and Shia. Honestly, he actually wanted to immediately shoot him dead, but it'd raise a commotion if he killed him after all, and that'd make Hajime the assailant. The town's guards were not that naive to let go of a murder. Basically, as long as it's at the limit of a legitimate self-defense, Hajime thought of just half-killing him inside this city.

Rishee could only say, "Eh? Eh?", while blinking her eyes in confusion because Hajime and his party stood up from their seats. Rishee was fine even though she was inside the range of Hajime's killing intent because he had simply excluded her from "Pressure's" targets. It was the reverse version of the pinpointed "Pressure" that he had used on Mottou to not let anyone notice him. It was the result of his training. It was natural for Rishee to be confused, that's because when she thought the pigman was being selfish, he suddenly fell on his bottom and began to leak from in between his groins.

By the way, the "Pressure" that affected the surroundings was done on purpose. His reason was to make the surrounding guys who gave him depressing looks comprehend him. "Don't try to touch them, okay?", something like that. Judging from the surrounding guys' pale expressions, it seemed there was no need to give out more warnings.

But, immediately after he dispersed the "Pressure" and tried to

leave the guild, a big man came to block Hajime and his party's route and stood like a Niou statue. He had a huge body with around 100 kilograms of weight in different ways than the pigman. His whole body was full of muscle with a longsword hanging on his waist, his appearance was like an experienced soldier's.

Maybe because he saw that huge figure, the pigman once again let out a shout coupled with kii kii sounds.

"Th-That's right, Leganid! Kill that shitty brat! H-He tried to kill me! Kill him slowly!"

"Young master, to kill him will be troublesome. Let's just half-kill him."

"Do it! I-I don't care, just do it! B-But, don't hurt the girls! Th-They're mine!"

"Roger. So, please splurge on my reward."

"I-I'll give you any number you want! Just do it already!"

Apparently, the giant called Leganid was hired by the pigman as his bodyguard. He was talking to the pigman without looking away from Hajime, then he floated a satisfied smile when he heard about the promised reward. He thought nothing of Yue and Shia which was unusual. He didn't look at them and only grinned at the word reward.

“Ou, boy. Sorry. I’ll half-kill you for the sake of my money. What, it’s not like I’ll kill you. Well, about those little misses… … just give up on them.”

Having said that, Leganid prepared his fists. He didn’t use the longsword because this was indeed a place where it shouldn’t be used. A commotion appeared in the surroundings when they heard Leganid’s name.

“O-Oi, by Leganid, you mean that “Black” Leganid?”

“”Black Wind” Leganid!? Just why did he become such a fellow’s bodyguard…”

“Isn’t it for money? He is “Money Lover” Leganid, you know?”

Hajime was able to guess the identity of the huge man in front of him from the surrounding whispers. Although his class was not known, he was a “Black”-ranked adventurer, the third rank from above, so he was quite the big-wheel.

Fighting spirit emitted from Leganid. Hajime thought it wouldn’t be a problem to half-kill him because it was legitimate self-defense, and the moment he began to swing his fist, a voice came to restrain him from an unusual spot.

“… … Hajime, wait.”

” ? What is it, Yue?”

Before she answered Hajime’s question, Yue, while dragging the nearby Shia, came between Hajime and Leganid. While Hajime and Leganid were dumbfounded by it, Yue replied as she looked ahead.

“… … Let us take care of him”

“Eh? Yue-san, am I included?”

Yue ignored Shia’s question. Having heard Yue’s words, before Hajime could reply, Leganid bursted into laughter.

“Gah hahahaha, are you little misses my opponent? That’s quite laughable. What? I’ll forgive you if you become my opponent at nig- “… … Shut up, thrash” kh!?”

Before Leganid could finish his indecent words, Yue cut his words and quickly use wind blade to attack and cut his cheek. Pusyu, a small sound was made, his blood came and dripped as is. It seemed to be a fairly deep cut. Leganid fell silent just as Yue commanded. Because Yue’s magic was too fast, he completely couldn’t react to it. In his mind, “Just when did she chant? Where is the magic circle?”, as he desperately tried to analyze her while letting out cold sweat.

Hajime who didn’t know what Yue meant was currently looking at Shia who also didn’t understand Yue’s intention and the talk

continued.

"… … We'll show them that we're not princesses that can only be protected."

"Aa, I see. We are showing them we can make a painful retaliation."

"… … That's right. Because we finally came here, I'll use that."

Having said that, Yue looked at Leganid with a more severe gaze and pointed at him.

"Well, I understand what you are trying to say. Certainly, if the princesses that they got are in truth fierce beasts, that should wake them up. Fortunately, there are a lot of witnesses… … Unn, isn't that good?"

"… … Fierce beasts is too cruel."

Hajime agreed with Yue's words and backed away with a wry smile. After Yue confirmed that Hajime had backed away, she sent an eye signal to Shia at her side. Having read the signal, Shia reached for Doryukken that was hung on her back, then as if not feeling the weight, she rotated it once in her hand.

"Oioi, just what can the miss from the Rabbitman tribe do? Because

there is my employer's request, will you just keep quiet?"

Without looking away from Yue, Leganid said that to Shia. However, Shia ignored Leganid's words and advised him back.

"The longsword on your waist. Shouldn't you draw it? Although I'm going to take it easy, won't it be dangerous to be bare-handed?"

"Hah, big words from Usagi-chan. Young master! Sorry, but forgive me for one or two scratches!"

Leganid didn't pay much attention to Shia and focused on Yue, while the pigman who was still nearby didn't give out any objections. Surely, he must've judged it'd be difficult to subdue Yue without hurting her. However, Leganid should have noticed it. If he thought using common sense, he should feel the incompatibility of the cherished slave and the strength of the Rabbitman tribe that held the warhammer, he should've recognized the significance of them leaving him to her after he caught a glimpse of Hajime and Yue's ability himself.

Without anymore talk, Shia held Doryukken near her waist… … and immediately dashed out. Then, she appeared in front of Leganid.

"Kh!?"

"Yaa"

While letting out an adorable voice, she changed into an overpowering manner and swung the super-heavy Sledgehammer, and it approached Leganid's chest whose expression was dyed with astonishment. Immediately before getting a direct hit, Leganid was barely able to cross his arms to defend, but…

(Isn't it too heavy!?)

He couldn't do anything even though he had braced himself, so he jumped back to soften the impact, but her swing was too fast and made his action meaningless. As a result,

GUSHA!

Along with that sound, Leganid was blown away and his back crashed into the guild's wall. Along with a roaring sound, Leganid vomited all the air in his lungs and inside his shaking point of view, he could see Shia's appearance as she lost her interest. Apparently, she thought he would be able to resist some more.

For a "Black"-ranked adventurer like himself, to be easily beaten by a girl of the Rabbitman tribe and the fact that she even lost her interest, Leganid could do nothing but laugh at himself. He revealed a smile that looked like a frown because of pain and tried to use his hands to stand up, but because of a sharp pain he collapsed as is. When he looked at the source of the sharp pain, he could see his crushed arm.

Fortunately, the one that was crushed was only his right hand, so he managed to stand up using the other arm while enduring the pain. Although his vision was still swaying, he somehow managed to firmly step on the floor. Even if it was meaningless, if he hadn't immediately jumped back, he probably wouldn't be able to stand up.

However, it wasn't a good thing for him to stand up. Although Leganid managed to stand up partly because of his willpower, when he saw Yue's appearance which looked at him with cold ice-like eyes while her right hand was thrust out, he could only grumble inside his mind.

(Young master, I am sorry, it'll be too unprofitable…)

Immediately, for the first time in Leganid's life, he gained a valuable and worst experience of "dancing in the air".

"Having been embraced by the wind, dance and scatter like a flower and be smashed "Wind Flower""

It was Yue's original number two, a compound magic using Gravity magic and the bullet of "Wind Burst", a magic that shot a cannonball of wind. By freely manipulating several cannonballs of wind, the cannonballs would always surround and "continue to fall" to crucify their target using the gravitational field. Following that, it was an unsophisticated magic where the target became a sandbag in the air as is when they were launched at the same time. By the way, what happened was just like the chant described.

When the dance with an one-sided lead was over, Leganid, gusha, fell on the floor with an unpleasant sound and didn't even twitch. Actually, he already lost consciousness after several attacks, but although she knew that, Yue kept attacking him without mercy, she especially concentrated her aim at his crotch and that made the surrounding men cover their crotches. Toward the brutal and severe attacks, Hajime in the back could only say "Ow", with a shivering voice filled with pathos.

The two consecutive spectacles were over. They were followed by a silence that wrapped the guild's interior. Not even one person tried to move, they could only stare at Hajime and his party. If one looked carefully, the people who seemed to be guild staff had tried to stop the fight, but after they arrived at the cafe, they were stunned when they tried to stretch their hands towards Hajime and his party. It seemed that spectacle even shocked them who had seen various kinds of adventurers.

While everyone was stunned, slowly the silence was broken. Hajime tsuka tsuka, began to walk. All gazes inside the guild focused on Hajime. Hajime's destination was… … The pigman.

"Hii! S-Stay awaay! J-Just who do you think I am! I am Poom Ming! You're defying Baron Ming!"

"… … Apologize to all of that character's fans on Earth, you pig"

A character from Earth floated in Hajime's mind when he heard the pigman's name, that's why he deeply frowned and he grandly trampled the pigman's face that had fallen on his butt.

“Pugya!?”

He let out a pig-like scream as his face was sandwiched between the shoe sole and the floor, then mishimishi, his skull let out that sound that made him scream again out of fear. After that, because his voice was annoying, the more he screamed, the more the pressure increased. His face became uglier, his eyes and nose were hidden by his cheeks’s flesh. Before long, maybe because he noticed that the pain increased as he screamed, he began to keep quiet. Well, there was also the possibility that he merely lost the strength to scream.

“Oi, piggy. Don’t you come into my sight again. Regardless if you are involved directly or indirectly… … There won’t be a next time.”

Even though Poom was still being trampled by Hajime’s shoe sole, he tried to nod desperately while trembling. Finally, he had lost the power to bluff. His heart was completely broken. However, Hajime was not that naive to let him go if it was only to this extent. To not let it become “You forget the heat once it passes your throat,” temporary fear was not enough. Because killing him was not a choice, instead, he was going to carve a fear that would be remembered forever.

Because of that, he raised his foot a little, then Hajime transmuted the sole into spikes and mightily trampled again.

“Gyaaaaaaaa!!”

The spikes pierced Poom's face and made numerous holes. In addition, one of his eyes were pierced and began to sprout a large amount of blood. Poom himself immediately fainted because of the pain. When Hajime moved his foot, what he saw was a tragic… … No, his original face was tragic in the first place so there wasn't much change, for now, Poom's blood-stained face was released.

Hajime, with a somehow refreshed expression, went toward Yue and Shia. Yue and Shia greeted Hajime with beautiful smiles. Following that, Hajime came to the side the guide; Rishee who was dumbfounded while smiling.

"Well then, Guide-san. Please take us to the place."

"Hahih! W-Well, that's, I, what can I say…"

Maybe because she felt the fear from Hajime's smile, Rishee was flustered. Her expression was obviously saying she didn't want to be involved with them. At least, that was because Hajime and his party were abnormals. Hajime, who had somehow guessed that, thought finding a new guide after such a commotion would be a hassle, so he wouldn't let Rishee go. Having realized Hajime's intent, Yue and Shia stood at Rishee's sides. "Hiiin!", was the miserable scream that Rishee let out.

And, her saviours came, although it was too late, the guild staff came.

"Umm, I am sorry, but please cooperate to be questioned over there."

A male staff member informed Hajime, and three members of the staff were approaching to surround Hajime and his party. However, they seemed rather stiff. Several others were going to see the condition of Poom and Leganid.

“Even if you ask me, that piggy was trying to snatch my companions, then losing his temper he tried to attack us when I refused him so I only returned that back to him. That’s all, there’s nothing more to explain. That guide and the surrounding guys and merchants are the witnesses. Especially, those guys on the nearby tables that seemed to have attentively listened to us, right?”

While Hajime said that, he glared at the surrounding men, his eyes were saying, “You know what will happen to your neck if you lie to them, right?” and that made the men nod intensely many times.

“Although we know that, it is a problem that happened inside the guild, so we’ll judge it fairly by hearing the complaints from both concerned parties… … it is the rule that needs to be followed by adventurers…”

“Both concerned parties… … Huh”

Hajime took a glance towards Poom and Leganid. It seemed they wouldn’t wake up anytime soon. Although the staff members had called healers, they would only likely awaken after two, three days.

“Until they wake up, are you saying we’ll wait for that? Aren’t we

the victims here? … … should I just carry him outside of this city and kill him?”

Hajime gave a blaming look toward the guild staff. Toward the typical claimer-like words, the male staff said, “Please don’t glare at us like that, it is our job so we can’t help it”, with an expression that gave off a desperate feeling. Following that, when they heard the last line that Hajime whispered, they tried to stop him in a panic.

Hajime, although reluctant, approached Poom and Leganid to wake them up with a sharp pain only to be stopped by the staff and they argued, then suddenly, a dignified voice came out.

“What is it? Just what on earth happened here?”

When you looked at the source, there was a slender, glasses wearing man who let out an intellectual atmosphere looking at Hajime and his party with strict eyes.

“Head of secretary Datt! You arrived at the right time! What happened was…”

The staff thought it was a fortunate event and called out toward the man called the head of secretary Datt. When Datt finished hearing the story from the staff, he turned a sharp gaze toward Hajime and his party.

Apparently, they still couldn’t be freed.

Arifureta: Volume 6 Chapter 4

Chapter 54 of the Web Novel.

Branch Head's Request

The head of secretary; Datt, pushed his glasses up with his middle finger, and talked to Hajime with a composed tone.

"I've roughly heard the story. It looks like it isn't a lie that there are many witnesses. Although I think you're overdoing it… … well, let's just say it's within a permissible range because they didn't die. For now, before they wake up and give their side of the story, I assume you'll be staying in Fhu-ren. So, I want to verify your identities and your contact address… … you won't object if it's just that, right?"

What's implied was, 'I won't concede more than this, you know?', so Hajime replied to the head of secretary Datt while shrugging his shoulders.

"Aa, I don't care. If that pig still tries to complain, then it's me who wants to be called. I'll try a more polite method of persuasion at that time."

Hajime didn't refuse him, then he presented his status plate to the still amazed Datt.

“Our contact address, well we still haven’t decided where to stay… … You can just ask that guide. We are going to stay at the inn she recommends after all.”

Because Hajime turned his gaze towards her, Rishee twitched then dropped her shoulders with a resigned look because she’d still be their guide.

“Fumu, that’s okay… … “Blue” huh. Even though the guy that lies there is “black”… … how about the status plates of the ones over there?”

Even a little, Datt was surprised when he saw Hajime’s status plate displaying the lowest rank of an adventurer; blue. However, because he heard it was the two women that defeated Leganid, he thought the girls were the stronger ones and asked Yue and Shia to submit their status plates.

“Well, Yue and Shia… … these girls lost their status plates and we still didn’t ask for a reissue. Look, isn’t that expensive?”

Hajime casually said that lie. Although there’d be no problem to let them see the pair’s abnormal strength, if possible he wanted to avoid the details being known.

“But, even if I can’t clarify their identities, it’ll be preserved in the record, so if you frequently cause trouble inside the guild, you’ll be blacklisted regardless of who’s the culprit and victim. If possible, can you pay the guild for a replacement?”

From Datt's tone, it seemed it was necessary to verify their identities by all means. But, if they got the status plates, then the two's peculiar magic would surely be displayed in the skill column before they could conceal it. That, along with the magic from the Age of the Gods that'd surely be displayed. It would definitely cause a ruckus. Although it's possible for Hajime and his party to just mow down everyone who tries to harm them during the ruckus, they wouldn't be able to stay here any longer. Hajime thought about a lot of troubles that would somehow come. Having read his thoughts, Yue talked to Hajime.

"… … Hajime, letter."

" ? Aa. That letter huh…"

Because of Yue's words, Hajime remembered that he had received a letter from Catherine of the Brook branch when they were about to leave Brook town. She said to show it to the one who managed the guild when they got into trouble in the guild, because it could help them. A mysterious letter.

If the letter was useless, according to the circumstances, Hajime considered to immediately leaving the city. Then he fished out the letter from his chest pocket and handed it to Datt. Because he only heard half of what Catherine had said, he didn't know the contents. That's why Hajime immediately regretted not checking the contents first.

"Although I don't know if it'll act as a substitute for our identification, I was told to hand this over to the one who manages

the guild by an acquaintanced member of the guild staff when we got into trouble.”

” ? An acquaintance in guild staff? … … Let me see.”

From the quality of Hajime and his party’s clothes, they didn’t seem to have any problems with money, that’s why Datt felt doubtful about his attitude that refused to replace the status plate, but they passed him a letter instead. When he opened it, he earnestly read it and floated a fish-like expression.

Following that, he turned to look at the face of Hajime and his party and the letter many times while he repeatedly reading the letter’s contents. From his figure that read the letter with wide opened eyes, he was trying to determine if the letter was genuine. Before long, Datt folded the letter again and carefully put it again inside the letter’s envelope, then he turned his gaze towards Hajime and his party.

“If the letter is real it’ll certainly serve as your identification… …I cannot decide by myself if the sender is real. I’ll confirm it with the branch head, so will you wait in another room? It won’t take much time. I’ll be back in ten, no, fifteen minutes.”

Because Datt’s response exceeded his expectations, “Seriously, who on Earth is Catherine?”, Hajime and his party were slightly taken aback

“Well, I don’t mind if it’s that much. I understand. We’ll wait.”

“Let the staff guide you. Well then, later.”

Datt called the staff at the side and left a message to guide them to another room, then he immediately disappeared into the guild, taking the letter with him. The designated staff asked Hajime and his party to relocate. Hajime and his party began to walk accordingly while being perplexed, but with a voice filled with anticipation rang out.

“Umm~, what should I do?”

It was Rishee’s. ‘If you still have to talk with the guild, can you excuse me?’, was what her eyes said. She obviously wanted to quickly separate from a seed of troubles, like Hajime and his party.

Hajime, with an expression as if it was natural, nodded and frankly replied.

“Wait for us… … don’t run away, kay? Aren’t you a pro?”

“… … Yes.”

Rishee dropped her shoulders and moved towards a seat inside the cafe. Her back said that although it was unpleasant work, she already accepted it, and the atmosphere of an upstanding member of society’s pathos drifted in the air.

After Hajime and his party were guided into the reception room, exactly after ten minutes, a knock came from the door. Hajime only answered with a word, then the door was opened. What appeared were a sharp eyed male in the latter half of his thirties, with blonde hair that was made into a swept back hairstyle, and Datt, from before.

“Nice to meet you, I am Ilwa Chang, the head of the Adventurer’s Guild — Fhu-ren branch. Hajime-kun, Yue-kun, and Shia-kun… … is it okay to call you that?”

After a simple introduction, the branch head; Ilwa confirmed the names of Hajime and his party and requested a handshake. Hajime returned the handshake while replying to him.

“Aa, we don’t mind. Our names, is it from the letter?”

“Just as you said. It was written in sensei’s letter. She seems to favor… … paid you a lot of attention. Your future is promising, but because you have a predisposition for trouble, if possible she wants us to take care of you, is the letter’s content.”

“Predisposition for trouble… … Huh. Trouble certainly continued to happen in Brook. Well, that’s okay. So, essentially will that serve as our identification? Or are there other questions?”

“Aa, Sensei already wrote everything here so there’s no need to question you further. She certainly has the eyes to discern people’s

characters. She even purposely wrote this letter, so I'll let this letter be your identification."

Apparently, Catherine's letter was really useful and let them meet the one who managed the guild. He seems to have close ties with Catherine, to have even called her "sensei". Shia, who sat next to Hajime, had been especially helped by Catherine, so she was interested in the story and timidly talk to Ilwa.

"That's~, who is Catherine-san actually?"

"Nn? Didn't you hear from the person herself? She was the Guild Master's head of secretary in the guild's headquarters located in the Imperial Capital. Afterwards, she became the one in charge of training everyone related to guild management. Currently, of the 5 branch heads sent to each town, 60% are her pupils. I am also one of them, so I can't go against her. Because of her beauty and pleasant character, at the time, she was a madonna-like existence to us, in certain ways she was also an adored big-sister-like existence. Afterwards, she married and transferred to the guild branch of Brook town. She said she wanted to raise her children in the country. Her marriage announcement was like a bolt from the blue. It became stormy after that. If you ask where, the guild in the Imperial Capital that is."

"Haa~ she really is an amazing person~"

"… … Catherine's amazing."

"Although I had thought she wasn't an ordinary person… … I

never thought she was such a central figure. Rather, even though she was so popular… … Currently… … No, it's better if I stop here."

Hajime and his party came to admire her when they learned of Catherine's true colors. It seemed they had always imagined her as an important person. Moreover, Hajime was somewhat looking at the distance, remembering the cruelty of time.

"Well, that's that, if there are no more questions, is it okay for us to go?"

Originally, they came here only to verify their identity, so Hajime tried to confirm with Ilwa if it was over because staying any longer would be meaningless. However, Ilwa's eyes shone and said, "Can you wait for a little longer?", as he tried to stop Hajime and his party. It somehow gave them a bad premonition.

Ilwa urged Datt that stood next to him and an application form was presented in front of Hajime and his party.

"Actually, I've expectations for your help, I want you to accept one request."

"I refuse."

The moment Ilwa requested something of them, Hajime tried to decline as he stood up from his seat. Although Yue and Shia also

followed after him, they stopped their feet when Ilwa spoke his next lines.

“Fumu, isn’t it fine to at least hear the story for now? If you listen, I think I’ll turn a blind eye to this affair…”

“… …”

What was implied was, “If you won’t hear me out, I’ll make you go through the troublesome procedures for this affair, you know?”, something like that. Using the testimonies from the surrounding people, even though Hajime and his party weren’t guilty of what was done to Poom and Leganid, what they have done was excessive self-defense. So according to the regular procedures, the guild would judge them fairly by hearing both concerned parties and this procedure would take quite some time. As a result, even if Hajime and his party weren’t in the wrong, on the other hand, they would spend time like fools until the necessary procedures were finished and the decision came. Also, if they escaped from these procedures, they’d likely be black-listed. In the future, that’d be troublesome because they wouldn’t be able to use the town’s guild facilities.

Hajime stared at Ilwa for a while, then he didn’t say “I’ll accept the request”, but “I’ll hear the story”, because he thought it’d be okay to at least hear him out to avoid the trouble, then he sat on the seat.

“It looks like you’ll listen to it. Thank you.”

“… … as expected of a big city’s guild branch head. You’ve a good

character.”

“Not as good as you though. Well then, the contents of the request is written here, to search for a missing person. A party of adventurers that accepted a request to investigate the northern mountain range area have not returned, so the family of one of the adventurers put up a missing person search request, something along those lines.”

Ilwa’s story if summarized, went something like this.

Recently, there were sightings of groups of demonic beasts in the northern mountain range area, which is why the guild made the investigation request. The northern mountain range area is a mountain that, once crossed, would lead you to an uncivilized area. Although not as strong as the demonic beasts inside the Great Dungeons, there are strong demonic beasts that only high-ranked adventurers could handle. It just that, besides the original members of the party that accepted the request, there was another member that tried to forcefully accompany them. By some happenstance, he eventually became a temporary member of the party.

This person was the third son of Count Kudeta; Will Kudeta. Count Kudeta always secretly made someone follow his son that had a tendency to rush out as an adventurer, just like a runaway. But because of this investigation request, the contact with his employer was lost, as it was unusual he was perplexed and put up a search request.

“Although the count had already tried to use his family’s power to form a search party, too many problems kept popping up, which is why he put up the search request to the guild. Well, it was just put

up yesterday. Because the missing party was considerably skilled, if they couldn't handle this, it'd just result in another disaster if accepted by regular Adventurers. That's why the big-guns should be the one to accept it. But unfortunately, such adventurers are all out on missions. Therefore, for you to come here with such timing, I want you to accept this request."

"From your statement, we don't have the required strength, so wouldn't that be useless? Unfortunately, I am a "Blue"-rank, you know?"

What Hajime implied was they wouldn't accept it because they didn't have the required strength.

"Didn't you instant-kill a "Black" called Leganid? Also… … for someone who easily searched around inside the Raisen Grand Canyon, do I need to say more ?"

" ! How did… … the letter? But, I didn't say anything…"

No one had heard the story of Hajime and his party searching around the Raisen Grand Canyon. Therefore, unless it was from the letter, there was no way for Ilwa to know about that. But, he was doubtful about how Catherine learn of this. While Hajime puzzled it over in his head, Shia timidly raised her hand.

Hajime turned towards Shia with a suspicious look.

“What is it, Shia?”

“U~mm, I inadvertently told her when we talked… … Teehee?”

“… … I’ll punish you later.”

” !? Y-Yue-san said it too!”

“… … Shia, you traitor.”

“I’ll punish both of you later.”

Apparently, the culprits were Yue and Shia. Hajime declared to punish them, and the two were passively drenched in cold sweat. Looking at their appearances with a wry smile, Ilwa continued his talk.

“Although the probability of them being alive is low, it’s not zero. Because the Count is my friend, I want you to begin as soon as possible. What do you think? There’s no one but you here. Will you accept it?”

Ilwa’s attitude was as if he was begging him, the guild was simply responsible for the commission, but he included more emotion in this. For him to be a friend of the Count, it’s possible he’s acquainted with the missing Will. So he personally felt anxious for his safety.

“Even if you say that, we already have a destination for our journey. We are only here because it’s along the way. We won’t go to the northern mountain range area. So, allow me to refuse.”

Hajime, even though it’s a matter of the life and death for a noble’s third son, unhesitantly refused him. However, maybe he foresaw that, Ilwa immediately proposed a reward faster than Hajime could stand up from his seat.

“I can increase the reward, you know? Although the reward listed in the application is in the form of cash, let me add more appeal to you.. I’ll promote your guild rank. If it’s your abilities then becoming “Black” is okay.”

“Well, I don’t care about money and rank, that’s why…”

“Then, in the future, when you have some trouble related to the guild, I can be your support, how is that? To have the guild head of Fhu-ren branch’s support, you’ll have influence inside the guild you can brag about, you know? You and trouble are pretty close after all. So, isn’t it good as a reward?”

“That’s a big treat for me. Aren’t you putting in too much effort for a friend’s son?”

Toward Hajime’s words, Ilwa’s expression crumbled. It became an expression full of regret.

“He… … Will accepted the request after I recommended it. I was also the one who passed the talk about the investigation request to the party. Even if you said there’d be an accident in the investigation, I thought there’d be no problem if he was with a party that had the required strength. I meant no harm. Will was not suited to be a noble, and he had yearned to be an adventurer for the longest time… … but, he didn’t have the disposition. Therefore, if he were with strong adventurers, then he could go to dangerous places. I only wanted him to realize that it was impossible for him to be an adventurer. He was already attached to me at a young age…. … that’s why, even though I wanted him to give up after this request…”

While he heard Ilwa’s monologue, Hajime thought about it slightly. It seemed there was a thicker relationship between Ilwa and Will than Hajime thought. Although he had said that with a clarifying face, internally, Ilwa must be clinging to the last straw of hope. Will’s odds of survival would become closer to zero as time passed. Having proposed such unreasonable rewards showed that Ilwa was in a hurry.

Hajime was also fed up with making excuses for Yue and Shia’s identification every time they came near a town. That’s why it’d be convenient to use this person’s name in order to access a town’s facilities from now on. Moreover, he had zero intention of catering to the Church of Saints or the Kingdom, and someday he might be labelled as a heretic. If that happens, it’d become extremely difficult for them to stay inside a town. That’s why it was a nice thing to have a personal connection that could clear that hurdle.

So, Hajime thought that if he wanted the support of a big city guild’s branch head, in this case, they must tell him their circumstances and forbid him to speak of it, so they could use him

in times of inconvenience. Because he seemed extremely intimate with that Will person, if they brought him back alive, Ilwa couldn't be ungrateful to them.

"Although there's no need to think about it because you already said that much… … I have conditions."

"Conditions?"

"Aa, they are not something difficult. I want you to give status plates to Yue and Shia. After that, promise me you won't tell anyone about what's written there. Furthermore, even if it isn't related to the guild, I will use all of your connections, for our convenience. These two."

"That's too…"

"If you can't, then pretend we never talked about this. We are going."

Because of Hajime who tried to stand up from his seat, Ilwa and Datt displayed expressions filled with impatience and agony. Although the first condition was not a problem, his second condition essentially meant that he wanted the Fhuren guild branch's head to be the limbs of a single adventurer. Because he had his own responsibilities, he couldn't immediately accept it.

"Can I ask why you demand that?"

“There’s no need to be that negative. They aren’t unreasonable demands, you know? It’s just that our existences are peculiar, that’s why when marked by the church… … No, from now on, I am sure we’ll be marked, so at that time I only want to use you to make it easier for us. It’s also good if you just become our allies in times of trouble. For example, not refusing us to use the facilities when we become wanted…”

“Is it certain you’ll become wanted people? Fumu, personally, your secrets make me anxious. Although Catherine-sensei said you’re not bad people… … now that you mention it, Shia-kun over there has marvelous physical strength, and although I didn’t see it, from the report Yue-kun has conjured a never before seen magic spell… … your secrets must be along those lines… … following that, you said that you’ll sooner or later be marked by the church… … you also didn’t try to hide it, and it looks like you are already prepared for that… … it’ll surely be hard to move into towns when that happens… … that’s why to make it easier for you…”

As expected of a big city’s guild branch head. He quickly thought inside his head. Ilwa thought about it for a while, then he matched his gaze to Hajime’s having decided what to do.

“I absolutely can’t support you when you ask for help for doing a crime because of ethics. So, I’ll hear the details of your request first, only then I’ll judge what to do. But, I promise I’ll at least be your ally… … I can’t concede more than this. What do you think?”

“Well, if it’s like… … I’ll accept it. Also, it’s okay for the reward to be given after the request is finished. I’ll bring back the young master dead or alive, is that okay?”

For Hajime, it was his first priority to obtain the status plates for Yue and Shia. It's unnatural for them to not have status plates because it's somehow always being requested to be shown, this was his first reason, and ultimately to make an excuse every time they came to a town was troublesome.

The only problem was that the person who prepared the status plates at the beginning would make a commotion, so he wanted to avoid it, but Ilwa's existence solved this problem. However, even if he made a verbal promise as the condition, there are still doubts. Sooner or later, the peculiarity of Hajime and his party might come to light, so it was not preferable because he might change sides immediately. That's why Hajime said to give the status plates as a reward after the request was completed. Whatever Will's shape was, Hajime would gain the answer from his afflicted heart, and he could calculate if Ilwa was good or not.

Ilwa was also able to guess Hajime's intentions. With a bitter smile, he felt relieved finding someone who could accept the search request.

"Truthfully, although your secrets make me anxious… … that's, I'll wait for you to finish the request. Just as Hajime-kun said, no matter what shape he is in, I want you to find traces of Will and the other… … Hajime-kun, Yue-kun, and Shia-kun… … Please take care of it."

Lastly, Ilwa looked at Hajime and his party with earnest eyes, then bowed his head. A big city guild branch's head bowing his head to adventurers. It wasn't something usual. It was because he was Catherine's pupil that his goodness as a person oozed out.

Having seen Ilwa's appearance, Hajime and his party stood up and without any eagerness, they lightly answered him.

"Kay."

"… … Nn."

"Yes."

Afterwards, they were given the downpayment, and a letter of introduction for the lakeside town at the foot of the mountain range area. They also received information about the investigation request that was given to the adventurers, and finally Hajime and his party left the room. Batan, the door was closed with a slam. Ilwa stared at the door for a while, then, "Fuu~", let out a big sigh. Inside the room, no one spoke a word, then Datt anxiously spoke to Ilwa.

"Branch head… … Is that okay? Such rewards are…"

"… … Will's life hangs in their hands. I can't ask anyone besides them. So, it can't be helped. Furthermore, they already agreed that I can judge first whether to lend them my power or not. There'll be no problem. Also, their secrets…"

"What's displayed in the status plates will be an "inconvenience", is

it…”

“Fumu, Datt-kun. Did you know? Herrlich kingdom’s Hero party, it seems all of them have unexpected statuses, you know?”

Datt opened his narrowed eyes wide because of Ilwa’s sudden story.

” ! Branch head, the summoned ones… … you mean one of them is “God’s Apostle”? But, from their tone it seems they are opposing the church, isn’t the Hero’s party managed by the Church of Saints?”

“Aa, it’s just as you said. But… … around four months ago, it seems one of them died inside the Orcus dungeon. He fell into the Abyss along with a demonic beast.”

“… … don’t tell me, that person’s still alive? If you said four months ago, isn’t the Hero’s party still full of novices? Although I don’t know what it’s like at the bottom of Orcus, to survive that…”

Datt couldn’t believe it as he shook his head, and denied Ilwa’s guess. However, Ilwa who somehow gave out an interested expression and once again glanced at the door from which Hajime and his party had left.

“That is true. But, if that’s so… … there must be a reason why he didn’t rejoin with his companions and even went on a journey,

right? Just what did he see in the bottom of the darkness, just what did he obtain?"

"Just what… … that is huh…"

"Aa, no matter what it is, surely, it's something worth making him decide to oppose the church. To put it frankly, he's determined to even oppose the world."

"The world…"

"For me, I want to make connections with such a peculiar man by all means. For example, even if they are chased by the church and the kingdom, right. Rather, Sensei might have guessed that, that's why she purposely gave them this letter."

"Branch head… … please be sure to know when to quit, okay?"

"Of course I will."

Towards the story on such a large scale, Datt became dizzy, even so, as Ilwa's head of secretary, he didn't forget to advise him. However, Ilwa was deeply in thought when he heard Datt's advice only replied in half absent-mindedness.

Arifureta: Volume 6 Chapter 5

Chapter 55 of the Web Novel.

Reunion in the Lakeside Town

In the middle of the vast plain was a highway stretching far to the North. Although it was called a highway, it was actually just ground without weeds since it had been treaded on so many times, thus it naturally became a road. Since there's no such thing as a suspension in carriages of this world, the carriage crew would surely have sore butts by the time they reached their destination.

Suddenly, a shadow ran through the uneven road at an unbelievable speed. On its black body were two wheels advancing forward on the uneven road, carrying silhouettes of three people.

They are Hajime, Yue, and Shia. They moved on the highway at a speed incomparable to the time when they were at the bottom of the Raisen Grand Canyon. It might be more than 80km/h. Because there was nothing to obstruct his magic, the magic-driven two-wheeler's original specs could be displayed. Their seating order was just as usual: Yue between Hajime's arms, and Shia at his back. Shia's rabbit ears were pata pata, fluttering in the wind.

Warm sunlight poured down because of the good weather, and with Yue using her magic to adjust the wind pressure, it could be said it was good weather for touring. In fact, Yue and Shia were feeling the warm sunlight and comfortable wind with their entire bodies, closing their eyes because it felt pleasant.

“Hau~, it’s niice~, Yue-saa~n. We should exchange places when we retuurn~”

“… … That won’t do. This is my spot.”

“Eh~, don’t say that, let us change our places~, it’s nice in the back~”

Shia demanded to Yue that they exchange their seats with a slackened and stretched tone. With an unpleasant face, Hajime looked at Shia’s relaxed face over his shoulder and answered in Yue’s stead.

“You know, you can’t sit in front, right? Also, you’ll only obstruct me. Especially those rabbit ears. They’ll hit my eyes when the wind blows.”

“Ah~, that’s riight~”

“… … It’s not good, she’s almost asleep.”

Apparently, Shia was half-asleep because of how comfortable it was. She laid her head on Hajime’s shoulder with all of her weight. She was also half-asleep when she was talking to Yue before.

“Well, with this pace we only need one day. I’ll go non-stop, so let’s rest when it’s time to rest.”

Just as Hajime had said, Hajime and his party were going to a town only one day away; the town closest to the northern mountain range area where Will’s party undertook the investigation request. They had advanced as is without taking a break, so they would probably arrive at sunset and start searching after a night’s stay in town. The reason they were in a hurry was, of course, the fact that as more time passed, Will’s party’s odds of survival decreased. But because Hajime was being proactive for another person’s sake, Yue was glancing upward with doubt on her face.

Hajime let out a wry smile when he saw Yue adorably incline her neck in between his arms.

“… … Proactive?”

“Aa, it’s better if he’s alive. If it’s like that, he will truly be grateful. After all, problems from the Kingdom and Church are waiting ahead of us. So, isn’t it better to have more support? I don’t want to take care of them one by one, after all.”

“… … I see.”

In fact, he didn’t know what could possibly be done with Ilwa’s support. If anything, the possibility of him being a type of useless support was bigger. But, if it could be acquired with little work, then the work might not be regrettable.

“I have also heard that our destination, the lakeside town, has plenty of rivers. That’s why the town’s outskirts are the continent’s number one rice-producing area.”

“… … Rice farm?”

“Ou, in other words it’s the rice. Rice. It’s the staple food of my hometown, Japan. I haven’t eaten it even once since I came here. So, although I don’t know if it is the same thing or not, I want to hurry to eat it.”

“… … Nn, I also want to eat it… … The town’s name?”

Hajime looked far into the distance while remembering rice dishes. Looking at the Hajime with a content expression plastered across his face, Yue hadn’t yet actually heard of the town’s name and asked him. “Hah”, Hajime was startled, he even was a little embarrassed when he noticed Yue’s gaze. He then replied with a somewhat loud voice to hide his embarrassment.

“It’s the Lakeside Town called Ul.”

* * *

“Haa, there’s no clue today, too… Shimizu-kun, where on earth did you go…”

With her shoulders dropping dejectedly, the person who was walking through Ul's main street was one of the summoned ones; the teacher, Hatayama Aiko. Her usual cheerfulness was gone. Currently, she was tortured with anxiety and worry, while a gloomy atmosphere hung around her. Somehow the main street's color, and even the streetlights were dimmer than usual.

"Aiko, don't be so disappointed. We still don't know anything. It's enough to just think he is safe. What can you do if you don't even believe."

"That's right, Ai-chan-sensei. Shimizu-kun's room didn't seem to be attacked. So isn't the probability of him going out on his own be higher? Please stop thinking of just bad things."

Because Aiko was low-spirited, the commander of Aiko's exclusive bodyguards; David, and her student; Yuka, called out to her. In her surroundings were the familiar Knights and students. They were also severely worried about Aiko and tried to talk to her.

One of the classmates, Shimizu Yukitoshi had disappeared for a little over two weeks. Aiko and the others had tried to search for him, leaving no stone unturned. However, his whereabouts were still unknown. There had been no sightings in this town, so they had sent messengers to the other towns and villages in the vicinity, but in the end their efforts were still in vain.

Although, at first they thought he was involved in an accident, Shimizu's room was clean. Shimizu himself was a "Dark Magician," a class that possessed high aptitude toward dark magic. He also had high aptitude in other magic systems, that was why he couldn't be done in by the neighborhood thugs. A lot of them thought he

left voluntarily.

Moreover, Shimizu was an obedient indoor type who had low sociability. Even among the classmates he didn't have an especially close friend. It was also surprising that he wanted to be Ai-chan's bodyguard. Because of that, other than Aiko, the students were sure of his safety. They were more concerned about Aiko, who became more low-spirited as the days passed. There was no need to say how worried her bodyguard Knights were.

Incidentally, they had reported it to the Kingdom and Church, and it seemed like a search party they had organized was coming. Shimizu was a summoned one with talent in magic, unlike the episode with Hajime in which the top management didn't even take an optimistic view. The search party would arrive in another two to three days.

Because words of concern came one after another, Aiko mentally hit herself. Whether he was involved in an incident or voluntarily disappeared, didn't matter, it didn't change the fact that it worried her. However, she must put it aside for now. Now her duty was to cheer up the other students at her side. That's why, "I am these children's teacher!". Aiko took a deep breath then slapped her cheeks with her hands to recover her spirit.

"Everyone, I am sorry for worrying you. It's just as you said. Nothing would be solved by brooding over it. Shimizu is an excellent magic-user. He'll surely be okay. Now, let us believe he is safe. Now, for today's dinner! Let's eat our fill and prepare for tomorrow!"

Although they knew she was overdoing it, the students obediently

replied to her with a shout “Ye～s”, as they cheered up. The Knights were also pleased with her appearance.

KARANh KARANh

When that sound rang out, the door of the inn Aiko and the others were staying at opened. It was the number one inn in Ul. Its name was “Water Fairy Inn”. A long time ago, a pair of husband and wife fairies stayed in Uldeia Lake, and that was the origin of its name. Uldeia Lake was the lake boasted as the largest in the continent, and located on the outskirts of Ul town. Its size was about four times that of Lake Biwa in Japan.

The first floor of “Water Fairy Inn” was a restaurant. It served dishes that were also Ul’s specialty products. The interior was calming, there were tables and bar counter that gave out a dignified atmosphere. Their ornaments were made with detail in mind, but did not stand out. Moreover, there was a modest chandelier on the ceiling, and flowers were arranged to add onto the calm atmosphere. It made one remembered the words “well-established”, an inn where one could feel its history.

In the beginning, Aiko and her students weren’t able to calm down because the inn was too high-class. It was impossible for Aiko and her student to stay at an ordinary inn because of their reputation, since people began to called them “God’s Apostles” and “Goddess of Good Harvest”. After some persuasion from the Knights, they agreed to stay at this place while they were in Ul.

In fact, they had spent time in one of the luxurious rooms of the Royal Palace, so Aiko and her students had gradually become accustomed to it. Now the inn had became a place where they

could truly relax. For Aiko and the others who came back exhausted from farmland improvement and in search of Shimizu, this inn's dishes were their only daily enjoyment.

All of them were seated in VIP seats in the innermost section of the inn, as they enjoyed today's dinner.

"Aa, it's always delicious~ I never thought I'd be able to eat curry in this other world."

"Well, it looks like stew though… … No, is it white curry?"

"No, there is also the bowl of rice topped with tempura, remember? Even the sauce is superb, right? Won't Japan lose?"

"That, isn't it because Tamai-kun only eats the premade ones? It's not good to compare it with Hokaben's."

"Well, I'll choose the fried rice-like things. So, let's stop this."

The student's tension was raised every night because of the dishes closely resembled those from Earth. Although there were slight differences in appearance and taste, the concept itself closely resembled their counterparts on earth. The abundance of ingredient was one of the reasons that increased the quality of Ul town's dishes. Other than the rice, there were fishes from Uldeia Lake, in addition to herbs and spices from the mountain range area.

While Aiko and the others ate the delicious dishes happily, a splendidly mustachioed male of around 60 years of age, approached them with a smile.

“Everyone, what do you think of today’s meal? If there is something you want to say, please tell us without any reserve.”

“Ah, Owner-san.”

The one who talked to Aiko and the others was the owner of the “Water Fairy Inn”; Foss Selo. He straightened his back, his eyes were gently narrowed, and gray hairs were mixed on his swept-back hair. He was a man who suited the calm atmosphere of the inn.

“No, today is also delicious. It heals us everyday.”

When Aiko replied with smile, Foss gladly said, “Thanks for the compliment”, and smiled. But, in the next moment, his expression was clouded as though he wanted to apologize. It was an expression unbecoming of Foss who always smiled gently. Wondering what had happened, everyone stopped eating and focused on Foss.

“Actually, although it’s regrettable… I can only serve this much for the dishes that uses spices today.”

“Eh!? You mean, we can’t eat Nilshisseer (the version of curry in this other world.)?”

Sonobe Yuka, who favored the curry, was shocked and tried to ask again.

“Yes, I am sorry. Anyway, no matter how many ingredients were used… it would be enough if it were the usual… However, there’s an unrest in the northern mountain range this month, so the number of people going to harvest the ingredients have sharply declined. Even a few days ago, a party of Adventurers who came to investigate the situation had gone missing. Thus, even more people don’t want to go there. It became a situation where this store doesn’t know when the goods will arrive.”

“Umm… What do you mean by unrest?”

“Something like the sightings of groups of demonic beasts… It’s a comparatively safe place as long as you don’t go into the mountains of the northern mountain range. Although there seems to be strong demonic beasts inside the mountain, they never come near on purpose. However, there were sightings of groups of demonic beasts in the mountain where there shouldn’t have been any.”

“That’s truly worrisome…”

Aiko frowned. The others were somewhat depressed and mutually looked at each other. Foss said with an apologetic expression, “It isn’t the right topic to talk while eating, huh?”, then he continued

to speak with a bright tone to recover the atmosphere.

“However, that disaster should be solved soon.”

“What do you mean?”

“Actually, today there were new customers who just arrived before the sunset. It seems they are going to the northern mountain range in order to search for the Adventurers who had gone missing. They were appointed by the Branch Head of Fhuren guild, so it looks like they are some serious big-guns. They might be able to determine the cause of this disaster.”

Although Aiko and her students were still seated, the bodyguard Knights commanded by David and currently eating with them let out “Hou”, with a half admiration-filled and half-interested tone. Even among the guild’s staff members, the Head of Fhuren branch was considered first class. For someone to be appointed to accept a request from that Branch Head meant that they were capable of clearing something only powerful people could accomplish. Their curiosity was aroused because they wanted to fight in the same battle as such people. Inside the Knights’ heads, they were listed the famous “Gold” class Adventurers.

Aiko and her students were looking at the unusual chatter of David and the Knights, then they began to hear voices from the stair connected to second floor. They were the voices of a boy and two girls. It seemed like one of the girls was complaining to the boy. It was Foss who reacted to those voices.

“Oya, speak of the devils. It is them, Mr. Knights. If you want to talk to them, please do it now because they are going to leave tomorrow morning.”

“I see, I understand. But, those are fairly young voices. Are there any “Gold” class that young?”

David and the Knights had already memorized the famous “Gold” class in their minds, but because there was no one with such young voices. Some of them looked at each other with perplexed expressions.

While they were in a state of confusion, the trio were approaching while talking.

The seats where Aiko and the others sat were the innermost seats enclosed by walls on three sides. It was a place where they could look anywhere inside the restaurant. For now, it was made into a private room with the use of the curtain. Needless to say, inside was the conspicuous Aiko’s party, was Aiko; the one hailed as the “Goddess of Good Harvest”, which made them even more conspicuous. It was why they often used the curtain whenever they ate their meals. Even today, they closed the curtain so they wouldn’t be seen.

From the other side of the curtain, they could hear the conversation of a boy and two girls.

“Mou, how many times I must say it until you understand. Please stop leaving me alone and create a world with just the two of you

in it. It makes me feel really, really lonely. Did you hear me? “Hajime”-san.”

“I heard, I heard you. Just stay in another room if you don’t want to see it.”

“Nmah! Did you hear what he just said, Yue-san? “Hajime”-san just said something coldhearted.”

“…”Hajime” …Bad!”

“Yes, yes.”

Within their conversation, the name the girls said instantly rattled Aiko’s heart. What did the girls just say? What was the boy called? This boy’s voice… isn’t it similar to “that boy”?, were the question that immediately floated into Aiko’s mind. She stiffened as though something had tied her down, so she could only stare at the curtain.

The same thing happened to Sonobe Yuka and other students by her side. In their minds, thoughts of a certain boy who had disappeared into the abyss four months ago resurfaced. He was a boy who the classmates strongly believed to have “died in this other world”. A boy they wanted to forget, a boy who stood out for better or for worse.

Because of the abnormal expression on Aiko’s and her students’

faces, Foss and the Knights tried calling out to them with dumbfounded gazes, but no one reacted. The Knights were wondering what on earth had happened as they looked at their faces. Then, Aiko blurted out a name.

"…Nagumo-kun?"

Because of the word she unconsciously let out, her body which had stiffened because of the unbelievable situation had regained its freedom. Aiko immediately stood up and her chair fell to the ground. She then pulled the curtain opened, so hard it might tear.

SHAAAA!!

Because of the unexpected loud sound that came from when the curtain was pulled, boy and two girls trio were only able to look with stupefied expressions.

Aiko shouted without confirming who the other person was. It was the name of her important student.

"Nagumo-kun!"

"Ah? …… Sensei?"

In front of her, with his eye wide open in surprise, was an eyepatched, white-haired boy. He looked completely different from

the Nagumo Hajime in her memory. Not only his appearance, his atmosphere was also completely different. Nagumo Hajime Aiko knew was a boy who always daydreaming, gentle, and quiet. Actually, Aiko admitted that a wry smile fit him, but it was her secret. However, the boy in front of her eyes had sharp eyes, clad with an unapproachable atmosphere. He was too different from her memory. If she passed by him inside the town, she was sure she wouldn't recognized the boy in front of her as Nagumo Hajime.

But if she looked carefully, his voice and face were the same as the one inside her memory. Above all… it was how the boy in front of her called her. That's right, it was "sensei". Aiko was convinced. Although his look and atmosphere had greatly changed, the boy in front of her was certainly her own student, "Nagumo Hajime"!

"Nagumo-kun… You're Nagumo-kun, right? You're alive… You really are alive…"

"No, you got wrong person. Bye."

"He?"

To meet the student who was thought to be dead, was a miracle. Being deeply moved, her tear glands loosened, and Aiko eyes became teary. "Where was he until now? What on earth happened? I am truly glad that you were safe." Were only some of the many things she wanted to say, but couldn't. Even so, the reply to her desperate words was a completely unexpected answer.

She unconsciously let out a stupid voice, and Aiko's tears were also

withdrawn. She could only blankly stare at Hajime who had begun to suta suta, walk towards the exit. ‘HAH’, she returned to her senses, and panicky ran after him while gripping onto his wrist.

“Please wait a second? Aren’t you Nagumo-kun? Didn’t you just call sensei sensei? Just how is that the wrong person.”

“No, you heard it wrong. That was… Right, it was a dialect meaning “small”. Un.”

“Even so, that’s extremely rude! Rather, there is no way such dialect exists. Why are you trying to deceive me? That appearance too… Did something happen? What are you doing in this place? Why, why didn’t you immediately come back to everyone? Nagumo-kun! Please answer! Sensei won’t let you deceive her!”

Aiko’s angry voice resounded inside the restaurant. Several people and guests looked at the rumored “Goddess of Good Harvest” as she caught and shouted at a man. “Suwah, is he Goddess’s man!?”, as they misunderstood, their eyes sparkled with curiosity. The students and the bodyguard Knights were also came out from the interior.

The students who had seen Hajime’s appearance had shocked expressions as they couldn’t believe what was in front of them. Half of it was because he was alive, while the other half was because of the drastic change to his appearance and atmosphere. However, they didn’t know what should they do, so they could only blankly looked at Aiko and Hajime.

On the other side, although Hajime looked calm, his mind was attacked by petit panic. In the town he came to, after accepting the request from the guild's Branch Head he got acquaintanced by chance, he never thought there was a chance he would meet Aiko and his classmates again.

Because it was such a sudden event, he inadvertently muttered "sensei", he even thought, "That can't be～", as he tried to deceived himself. His lifecards after Aiko's angry barrage of questions were to "run away", "continue with the mistaken person act", "became a suspicious foreigner", and "let's just kidnap Ai-chan", were all the cards that came to his mind. He especially didn't know how the last one came up.

Then, Hajime was saved by his reliable partner. Of course it was not the regrettable rabbit ears character, but the Vampire Princess. Yue, came in between Hajime and Aiko, then she forcibly shook off Aiko's hand which was gripping Hajime's arm. On their side, the bodyguard Knights were letting out slight bloodthirst.

"… Let go, Hajime is troubled."

"Wh-What are you? Currently, sensei have an important talk with Nagumo-kun…"

"… Then, calm down a little."

Because the beatiful girl stared at her with cool eyes, Aiko slightly flinched. There wasn't much of a height difference between the two. Normally, it would be labeled as a fight between kids.

However, Aiko was actually younger by age, and Yue wore a bewitching atmosphere despite her appearance. No matter who saw it, they looked like an adult (Yue) and an angry child (Aiko). Aiko was wary of Yue, so she quietly back away from Hajime with blushing cheeks because of her own words and the way she got mad at him. As she straightened her back to show her dignity as an adult, although it was too late, Aiko was… just like a child doing a stretch.

“I am sorry, I was distracted. Let’s return from the beginning, you are Nagumo-kun, right?”

This time, Aiko said it quietly, but her voice was filled with conviction as she tried to ask Hajime, and matched her glance with him. Having seen such Aiko, Hajime was convinced no matter how he tried to deceive her, she wouldn’t change her conviction and she would chase after him no matter where he go. Thus, scratched his head and replied with a profound sigh.

“Ah. Long time no see, sensei.”

“As expected, you’re Nagumo-kun after all… You’re alive…”

Aiko’s eyes became teary again, but Hajime didn’t think anything about it as he shrugged his shoulders.

“Something like that. After a lot happened, I’m somehow still alive.”

“I am glad. I truly am glad.”

After he took a glance at Aiko who was unable to say more than those words, Hajime went to the nearest table and sat down. Having seen him, Yue and Shia also sat. Shia was somewhat perplexed. Aiko and the others were astonished by Hajime’s sudden action. Hajime had regained his composure and he ignored the surroundings, only to beckon towards Foss who had watched how the situation progressed while he stood behind the students.

“Umm, Hajime-san. Is that okay? Aren’t you acquaintances? Although it was just my guess… the other world’s…”

“That thing doesn’t matter at all. I was just surprised when they suddenly appeared, well, that’s all. We are originally came for dinner, so let’s order now. I have been truly expecting this. Don’t you know? This curry… Ah, you didn’t know it. The spicy dish was called Nilshisseer. I am happy just by imagining the taste…”

“… Then, I’ll order that, too. I want to know what taste Hajime like.”

“Ah, to casually appealed him… just a expected of Yue-san. Then, me too. Clerk-saa～n, we want to order～”

In the beginning, Shia was timidly sneaking glances at Aiko and the others, but changed her mind after Hajime said those words. Then Foss came by to take their order with a troubled smile.

However, naturally, there was no time for them to wait. Aiko, who was dumbfounded again by how Hajime seated himself at a nearby table and began to order, returned her to her senses and she approached Hajime's table. She said, "Sensei is angry!", with a truly angered expression as she pishi, hit the table.

"Nagumo-kun, our talk isn't over. Just how can you start to order as if it were the most natural thing in the world. In the first place, just who are these girls?"

What Aiko had said represented the feelings of everyone around them. The Knights who guessed Hajime was Aiko's student, who they heard had died four months ago, the students who waited behind Aiko, and everyone else were, "Un un.", nodding and they waited for Hajime's answer.

Hajime frowned because of it would be an annoyance. Because he thought he couldn't have a calm meal thanks to Aiko, who would keep waiting until he answers her questions even as they ate, he reluctantly turned his glance toward Aiko.

"I have come here in just a single day, without stopping, because of a request. That's why I am hungry, so just let me eat my meal. Also, these are…"

Hajime turned his glance towards Yue and Shia. And these two, before Hajime could say it, began an impactful introduction towards Aiko and the others.

"…Yue."

“I am Shia.”

“” I am Hajime(-san)’s woman.””

“Wo-woman?”

Aiko somewhat stammered said, “Eh? Eh?”, as she alternately looked between Hajime and the two beautiful girls. It seemed she couldn’t processed the information. The students behind her were also perplexed. Well, the male students’ expressions said, “That can’t be!”, as they restlessly looked between Yue and Shia. Gradually, their face reddened as they were charmed by their beauty.

“Oi, setting Yue aside. Shia, aren’t you different?”

“That! Hajime-san so cruel. Even though you stole my first kiss!”

“No, just how long you want to drag that thing. That was lif —”Nagumo-kun?”…What is it, sensei?”

Because of the remark that he “stole Shia’s first kiss”, it seemed her thought process had finally caught up. Then, Aiko’s voice dropped an octave. Inside Aiko’s head, it seemed she imagined the scene where Hajime was laughing loudly while being attended by the two beauties in each arm. Her expression said everything.

Blushing, Aiko interrupted Hajime's words. Her face was filled with determination to return her misconducting student into the right path. Following that, a large thunder called "Sensei's anger" fell into Ul town's number one and first class inn.

"To steal a woman's first kiss, and even t-two-timing! So, you didn't immediately return because you wanted to play around! If so… that's unforgivable! Ee, sense will absolutely not forgive it! It's time for scolding! Just wait there, Nagumo-kun!"

Hajime looked at Aiko with a skeptical gaze, who yelled "kyan kyan," as he let out a deep, deep sigh thinking it was going to be troublesome.

Arifureta: Volume 6 Chapter 6

Chapter 56 of the Web Novel.

Aiko's Worries

Because of Aiko's roar, Hajime and his party were guided to a VIP seat, away from the eyes of the other guests. Then, Aiko, Sonobe Yuka, and other students bombarded him with questions. However, Hajime was focused on the Nilshisseer (other world's version of curry) in front of his eyes. He answered them in a daze.

Q : You fell from that bridge, what happened afterwards?

A : I did my best.

Q : Why did your hair turn white?

A : The result of me doing my best.

Q : What happened to your eye?

A : The result of me doing my ultra best.

Q : Why didn't you immediately return?

A : No reason to do so.

After hearing that much, Aiko yelled angrily with her cheeks puffed, “Please answer us seriously!” Indeed, her being unable to show any intensity in that action was a sad thing. As usual, Hajime looked like a willow when the wind blew. Without matching her gaze, he deliciously enjoyed the Nilshiseer, while sometimes listening to Yue and Shia’s quarrel. His face was full of satisfaction.

Angered by his appearance, was the commander of Aiko’s bodyguards, David. He couldn’t endure the woman he fell for being ignored. That’s why he threw his fist onto the table and a loud sound rang out.

“Oi, you! You’re being asked by Aiko! Answer her seriously!”

Hajime took a glance at David, then “Haa”, let out a sigh.

“Aren’t we eating now? Behave yourself.”

His protest was completely ignored. However, David has great pride because, as a Temple Knight, he was entrusted as the commander of an important person’s bodyguard, so he couldn’t endure it and his face turned red. Following that, because Hajime wouldn’t give him a clear answer, he changed his target as he turned to look at Shia.

“Hmm, did you say behave? That word, I return it back at you. To have a dirty animal share the same table as humans, you are the one who has no manners. Won’t you at least chop off those ugly ears? She will look more human like that.”

Shia's body trembled as she was stared at with eyes full of disdain. In Brook town, from her impression of the inn, having been close to Catherine, added to Hajime's existence, it was full of amiable people. Although there were lots of discriminating eyes in Fhuren, and even though they recognized her as a slave, no one made fun of her by directly saying that.

In other words, since the beginning of her journey with Hajime, this was the first time she had directly received discriminating words as a demi-human. Although she wanted to think nothing of it, she was slightly surprised by the attack, even after she had got accustomed to the outside world, she could still feel the damage. Shun, Shia looked down depressedly.

If she looked carefully, she could see that it wasn't limited to just David. Chase and the other Knights also looked at Shia with the same eyes. No matter how intimate they were with Aiko and her students, they were Temple and Imperial Knights. They were men from the Church of Saints and the Kingdom, so their discrimination towards the demi-human race was strong. After all, the source of discrimination were the Church of Saints and the Kingdom. Even though David and the Knights were influenced by Aiko and could think for themselves, they wouldn't have changed after only a few months because this sense of value was not so shallow-rooted.

Because it was something unreasonable, Aiko instinctively tried to protest. But before that, Yue who grasped the downcast Shia's hand, directed a glare as cold as absolute zero at David. A cold gaze that seemed to be able to freeze one's body came from the highest class, bisque doll-like beautiful girl. David flinched for a moment, but became enraged when he saw that the pressure was coming from a girl with the appearance of a child. Usually, he wouldn't easily lose his temper, but the words he'd just spoke, and

looking at his dear Aiko, he had lost it.

“What, what’s with those eyes? That’s rude! Even though you aren’t a God’s apostle, you are trying to oppose a Temple Knight!”

David spontaneously stood up. Although the vice-commander Chase tried to stop him, faster than that, Yue’s words clearly rang out in that uproar.

“…A small man.”

Those were words of ridicule. Words that ridiculed how small his vessel was, to shout just because of a difference in race, and lose his temper when glared at by a girl. David was already lost in anger. As a man, being called small in front of Aiko drove him over the edge.

“… You pagan. I’ll send you to hell along with that animal.”

As he quietly muttered that without any expression, David reached for the sword by his side. Because the carnage appeared all too sudden, the students were flustered, while Aiko, Chase, and the Knights were all trying to stop him. However, as though he didn’t hear the surrounding voices, David finally slightly pulled the sword from its sheath.

At the same time,

DOPANh!!

A dry, explosive sound echoed inside “Water Fairy Inn”. At the same time, David, who was about to pounce at any time, was hit in the head and got blown away. As it were, the back of David’s head hit the wall behind him, hard, and a terrific sound resounded. His eyes turned white as he collapsed. The sword was released from David’s hand and gashan!, it fell to the floor.

No one was able to comprehend what had happened just now, and were all stunned. Their gazes turned to David who collapsed with the whites of his eyes showing. Then someone was curious as to what had happened to emit such a large and explosive sound, it was Foss, who pulled the curtain. Following that, he became wide-eyed as he was stunned by the disastrous scene in front of him.

On the other side, Aiko and the others were finally able to regain their senses when Foss entered. Their gazes which were then directed toward David, were naturally drawn to the source of the explosive sound.

In that place was something Aiko and her students had knowledge of, but had never actually seen. It was something from the other world, something completely unknown to the Knights. There was the figure of Hajime holding a “gun” while seated. White smoke came out of Donner. At least the bullet he shot was a non-lethal rubber bullet.

Although they didn’t know the details, the Knights had guessed it was Hajime’s attack, so they simultaneously put their hands on

their swords while letting out killing intent. However, what immediately followed, was by a violent killing intent incomparable to the Knights'. It was as though they were attacked by a hammer that fell from heaven, as the Knights who began to stand were forced to sit back down into their seats.

Although they weren't submerged in the killing intent, having felt the pressure Hajime emitted, Aiko and the others turned pale as they trembled.

Hajime put Donner on the table and gotoh, it made an unnatural noise. Its purpose was to threaten them. Following that, he clearly declared his standing and asked where Aiko and the others would choose to stand.

"I have no interest in you lot. I have never thought of wanting a relationship with you guys. Moreover, I won't say anything about what had happened to me or what I want to do. I am only here for work, so I'll resume my journey once it's over. That's where we say good bye. Also, let's not intervene with each other. No matter what kind of selfish things you want to do, just don't obstruct me. Just like now, if you become hostile… I'll likely kill you."

Understand? Was what Hajime's eyes asked, but no one said anything. Immediately, he turned his gaze towards Chase and the Knights, who desperately endured the Pressure, and all they could do was slightly nod.

Next, Hajime turned his gaze towards Aiko and her students. Aiko didn't say anything. No, more like she couldn't. It was not only because of the pressuring feelings that gushed out, but also because of Hajime's words, and how her student change without her

knowing. Those were not something Aiko's pride could allow.

Hajime sighed as he shrugged his shoulders and canceled the "Pressure." Although there was no answer from Aiko, Hajime could somehow sympathize with her feelings, so he didn't force her for an answer. The other students were obviously frightened, so he guessed they wouldn't dare challenge him.

With the tremendous feeling of oppression vanished, the Knights collapsed and let out deep sighs. Aiko and her students were also exhausted and sat deeply on the chairs. As though nothing had happened, Hajime resumed his meal, and talked to the depressed Shia.

"Oi, Shia. That's something normal "outside." There is no need to take it seriously, okay?"

"Yes, that's right… Although I understand that,… as expected, for humans, these ears are disgusting."

With self-derision, Shia patted her ears with her hands and let out a bitter smile. To such a Shia, Yue whispered words to comfort her with honest eyes.

"…Shia's ears are lovely."

"Yue-san… Is that so?"

Even so, Shia was still unconvinced about it, so this time Hajime followed up with a somewhat amazed expression. Because Yue often said “Bad!” to him, Hajime’s attitude towards Shia had softened little by little, and he tried to comfort her with the utmost of his ability.

“You know, their education was practically brainwashing from the Church and nobles of the Kingdom, so it’s just their feelings of aversion. Don’t you know that the Rabbitman tribe are the number one most popular pet slaves? In other words, no one thinks of you as disgusting in general.”

“Th—… that’s so… …U-umm, by the way Hajime-san,… Umm… what do you think… about my ears?”

Having guessed that those words were Hajime’s own way of comforting her, Shia felt slightly happy. Then she asked him with an upward gaze with blushing cheeks. As if saying, “I want to know, but at the same time don’t want to,” her rabbit ears completely drooped, and sometimes they twitched towards Hajime.

“… I don’t think anything about them…”

Stealing a glance at the rabbit ears, Hajime returned his gaze towards his meal as he tried to deceive her, and replied snappishly. The rabbit ears drooped even more as though they regretted asking. However, with the next line from Yue, they immediately regained their energy as they stood up; hyupa!.

“… They are Hajime’s favorite. He cuddles them when Shia’s sleeping.”

“Yue!? Didn’t you promise not to tell her that!?”

“Ha-Hajime-san… you like my rabbit ears… Ehehe.”

With her cheeks dyed red, Shia tried to suppress her grin with both hands, and as if saying “Wa～i!”, her rabbit ears above were moving, expressing her delight.

The awkward and strained atmosphere of massacre that floated in the air until now had dissipated as if it were an illusion. The atmosphere had mysteriously turned pink-colored, so Aiko and her students, even the Knights were blinking in amazement. For a while, they watched Hajime’s love-comedy interaction, then one of the male students; Aikawa Noboru muttered.

“Huh? How strange. Although until just now Nagumo was truly scary, now it isn’t killing intent that’s gushing out…”

“You too, huh. Rather, those two, although they are dangerously cute,… although they’re totally in my strike-zone,… but, to flirt in front of my eyes is torture for me…”

“… It’s just as Nagumo said, those things don’t matter at all. But, having the skill to get along with girls from another world… I want to ask him how!… Noboru! Akira!”

“”Heh, we are going to hell together, Atsushi!””

With their eyes boiling with envy, they stared at the Hajime who made them shudder until just now; it was the unison of three males from Ai-chan’s bodyguards. The serious atmosphere was completely blown away. The female students began to regain their original demeanor, and they looked at the male students with terribly cold eyes.

Chase, having realized the atmosphere had calmed down, started to heal David. At the same time, with his caution and hostility were subdued, he asked Hajime with a smile. Apart from Hajime’s circumstances, there was something he had to hear by all means.

“Is it okay to call you Nagumo-kun? About before, my commander had been rude. No matter what, we are Aiko-san’s bodyguards after all, so we become oversensitive if it concerns Aiko-san. Somehow, I would like for you to forgive us.”

Although Hajime wanted to interrupt him and say, “How can oversensitivity turn into murder?”, but the word ‘murder’ itself made him unable to say anything. That’s why he just silently waved his hand to tell him to stop that. Because of this perfunctory attitude, Chase’s eyebrows slightly twitched, but his poker face-like smile didn’t crumble. Following that, with quick thinking, because he couldn’t just leave it at that, he cut to the case about Hajime’s artifact-like thing in front of him.

“I assume… that’s an artifact. Although I can’t be sure with my limited knowledge, I can see that it’s quite a powerful one. It’s

much faster than a bow, it also didn't need chanting or a magic circle. Just where on Earth did you get it?"

Although he was smiling, Chase's eyes weren't. Judging from his words, since there wasn't the presence of magic being used, he thought it had a bow-like pure physical mechanism and could be mass-produced. If so, it'd be a great help for the sake of dominating against enemies before war breaks out. However the Knights weren't a match for Hajime, so he at least wanted to get information out of him.

Hajime stole a glance at Chase. Following that, before he could say anything, he was interrupted by an excited voice. It was a male classmate; Tamai Atsushi.

"Th-That's right, Nagumo. Isn't that a gun!? Just, how did you get ahold of that!?"

Chase reacted to Tamai's shout.

"Gun? Tamai, do you know anything about that?"

"Eh? Ah, that's right, I know of it. It's a weapon from our world."

Chase's eyes shone because of Tamai's words. But afterwards, he stared at Hajime.

“Hou, in other words, it isn’t an artifact from this world… If that’s so, it must be made by someone from a different world… and of course the maker is…”

“It is me.”

Hajime easily answered that he made it. Chase, because he held the impression of Hajime as a secretive person, was surprised by how easily he admitted it.

“You admit it so easily. Nagumo-kun, do you know what it means to hold that weapon? That…”

“It could completely change the situation of the war in this world, … right? That’s if you can mass-produce it. Mostly, you want me to return with you and teach you how to make it, or something like that? Naturally, I reject it all. Just give up.”

Hajime’s words had left him completely helpless. Those words seemed to be prepared beforehand. But, Chase didn’t give up. That’s how attractive the gun was.

“But, the Soldiers with low levels can have high offense if it could be mass produced. When that happens, we can make use of a lot of people in the upcoming war, and our chances of victory will also greatly increase. If you cooperate, doesn’t it mean you also help your teacher and friends? If so…”

“No matter what you want to say, I won’t cooperate. If you try to take it, then it means you’re my enemy. At that time… be prepared to be annihilated even before the war breaks out.”

Hajime’s quiet words sent a chill toward Chase’s whole body and he shut his mouth. Then, Aiko managed to intervene there.

“Chase-san. Nagumo-kun has his own intentions. Please don’t force my student. Nagumo-kun too, please stop saying such extreme things. Be more peaceful… Nagumo-kun, are you seriously not coming back?”

“Ah, I don’t want to return with you. Tomorrow morning, after I complete the request, I’ll leave as is.”

“Why…”

Aiko looked at Hajime with a pained expression, she wanted to know his reason, but Hajime rose from his seat before she could ask. Unbeknownst to them, Yue and Shia had also finished their meals. Although Aiko tried to stop him, Hajime ignored her and climbed the stairs to the second floor, accompanied by Yue and Shia.

At the time Aiko and the others were left behind, a subtle and indescribable atmosphere was in the air. They were glad the classmate they thought was dead was actually alive. But, for the person himself, they seemed to have not even registered in his eyes. Moreover, he had become strong to the point, that it was impossible to compare him to his past self. He was not the same as

the one who was once called “incompetent” in contempt as they looked at him from above.

Moreover, about the contempt, they had pretended not to notice Hiyama and his friends bullying him. Followed by that “friendly fire” incident, they could only feel more indebted because of Hajime’s ambiguous attitude. As a result, no one could proactively reach out to Hajime.

Aiko herself was greatly shaken by her student’s change and angered by the current development in her mind, so she was unable to stop Hajime.

Chase, while he looked at the currently recovering David at the side, seemed to think of something.

With their meals completely cooled, their appetites also disappeared. Without looking at the food in front of them, all of them began to deeply think about how “Hajime survived” after he left them.

Just what on Earth could completely change a person like that, what did Hajime think at that time when the “friendly-fire” incident happened, what the current Hajime thought of them… Most likely, he held a grudge against them. With those thoughts making revolutions in their minds, all of them became depressed, and the day was over.

* * *

In the middle of the night. Surrounded by the night, they were completely exhausted. Both physically and mentally, thanks to the unexpected development. All of them fell asleep, but Aiko wasn't able to sleep even now. Aiko's room was a single room, so it was not a large one. A table set and bed with carved wooden feet, a small fireplace, and a leather sofa in front of it. In the winter, the flame would surely brightened the room, and the inn guests would be warmed just by seeing it.

Aiko was thinking about what happened earlier today, she watched the unlit fireplace while deeply entrusting her body to the sofa. The insides of Aiko's head was like an unarranged bookshelf, with all of that information in disorder.

Even if she couldn't think about it, she wanted to think. And from then on, her head that ran round and around in circles didn't give out any constructive opinions at all. She recalled smiling when she found out her student was alive, then she could only knit her eyebrows because of his unamicable attitude.

She had seen a glimpse of Hajime's power through David's speech and conduct, she thought he wouldn't have been able to survive if he didn't change, and how much hardship Hajime must have experienced. At that point she could only let out a sigh because she couldn't help him at all. However, she recalled his interactions with the two girls, she thought he must have found companions he could trust, and she smiled again.

And, suddenly, a voice rang out inside the room where there should be no one but her inside.

“Why do you keep changing your expression, sensei?”

“Kh!?”

Aiko turned around to the source of the voice while wide-eyed. There was Hajime who stood at the entrance door with his arms folded. Aiko was so surprised that she became tongue-tied, but somehow managed to speak.

“Na-Nagumo-kun? Wh-Why are you here, how…”

“Even if you ask how, I just came through the door, no more no less.”

“Eh, but the lock…”

“My class is transmutation master, you know? Unlike the locks on earth, I can open this kind of lock mechanism.”

Hajime lightly answered, which stunned Aiko for a while. Her heart loudly throbbed in surprise and that somehow managed to calm her down. She frowned, then criticized him.

“At such a time, moreover it’s rude to suddenly barge into a woman’s room without even a knock. To purposely open the lock… just what do you want?”

For a moment, the word yobai came into Aiko's mind but she immediately erased the thought. She slightly shook her head as she recalled the fact that the other person was her student. Hajime only warded off Aiko's scolding like a willow blown by the wind, and he told her the reason for this thoughtless visit.

"Well, I am sorry about that. I just didn't want anyone to know about this visit. I wanted to talk to sensei, but before, there were the fellows from the Church and the Kingdom, so I couldn't do it. After all, the contents of this talk might have angered those guys."

"A talk? Nagumo-kun, it was okay to talk to sensei and the others…"

By chance, she thought he wanted to return with them, and Aiko's eyes shined in expectation. If it was a consultation from her student, then it was as though the room was a teacher's office. But her expectations were immediately denied by Hajime.

"No, I don't want to return, you know? So stop looking at me with those eyes filled with expectation… What I want to talk about now is something I thought sensei would be the most calm to listen to it. After this talk, I'll leave what you want to do to your own."

Having said that, Hajime began to talk about the story of "Liberators" and the Mad Gods he heard from Oscar.

Hajime obviously had his own reasons for telling Aiko this story.

According to the Gods' intentions, the heroes; Kouki and the others, were made to dance in their game, and the Gods never intended to return them to their own world. To save the human race from the demon race, in other words to win the upcoming war, is the result of the Gods pulling the strings behind the stage in the first place. The heroes themselves were only interesting pieces they had gathered without any real reason. Rather, they only thought it was more appropriate to start a new game using the heroes.

However, for Hajime, there was no reason to pointedly explain this to Kouki and the other students. He wasn't interested with what his classmates wanted to do, and it would also only be a hassle for him. Even if he told him, that man who believed that justice always laid with the majority wouldn't believe him.

Because he was alone, between the words of a boy who had changed drastically and words that requested to save the majority, he didn't even need to think about who they would trust. Rather, because many people believe and worship "Ehito-sama," he'd only be mocked and criticized. Because of that, Hajime didn't want to become related to Kouki in the least.

However, by coincidence upon coincidence, it resulted in him meeting Aiko. Hajime himself knew Aiko's main principles always centered around her students. In other words, regardless of the circumstances of this other world, she would calmly make a decision for the sake of her students. Following that, judging from the attitudes of his classmates today, and how they yearned for Japan, if it was Aiko, surely her words would be able to influence them. Those were Hajime's thoughts.

Although, he didn't know how her influence would change their actions. With this information, if the movement of Kouki and the

others became different from what the Gods intended, they'd surely put much more attention towards Kouki and the others. Hajime already knew that his existence would stand out like a sore thumb when he journeyed to conquer the Great Dungeons, and there was the possibility of receiving interference from the Gods. That's why, by indirectly passing the information using someone they trust, he could rearrange the actions of Kouki and the others. Thus, he could delay being noticed by the Gods. His only objective was to draw attention away from himself.

In addition, without relying on the Gods, Hajime's aim was to search for different ways for them to return. Furthermore, just like the "Liberators," he wanted to show Kouki and the others how their original allies became manipulated enemies, it's his intention to plant the wedge of distrust towards those Gods.

In the first place, he was only able to think of this idea because of the coincidental meeting with Aiko, so Hajime never expected anything out of it. For Hajime, there was no grudge nor hatred towards his classmates. He was just indifferent towards them. If they could be used, then he'd used them, and he'd leave them alone if they didn't seem useful. That's why he didn't disclose this information only by chance.

Having heard the truth of this world from Hajime, Aiko was dumbfounded. It was not known if she truly understood it. Processing this information, no matter what kind of ideas she got, it still took her more time.

"Well, that's all. That's what I came to know from the depths of the Abyss. I'll leave what to do after knowing this to sensei. It's okay to think of it as just nonsense, and it's also okay to move into action if you think it's the truth. Just do as you want to."

“Na-Nagumo-kun, don’t tell me, to deal with those “Mad Gods”… you began your journey?”

“Hah, that can’t be. I feel from the bottom of my heart that it doesn’t matter what happens to this world. I am only searching for a method to return. That’s why I went on a journey. The reason I’m telling you this is because it seems like it’d be convenient to do so, that’s all.”

Aiko wore an indescribably subtle expression because he snorted at her question. Although she was relieved he didn’t rashly poke his head into danger, she couldn’t help but frown as a teacher because of how easily he said he could cast the others away. But, she herself also made her students her first priority in this world, so she couldn’t say anything back. As a result, she tried to change the topic with a subtle expression.

“Do you believe in that?”

“That’s so. The Great Dungeons are the keys. It’s okay if you search for it if they interest you. Once you exceed the 100th level of Orcus, you’ll happily find the real Great Dungeon. First of all, by looking at your appearances today, you’ll immediately die when you go there. It’s out of the question if you can’t ignore “Pressure” of that level.”

Aiko was reminded of the pressure that gushed out from Hajime at dinner time. Following that, she opened her eyes filled with complex feelings of sympathy, admiration, and other various feelings when she thought again about the harsh conditions he

must have lived through.

For a while, their silence continued. The room was filled with silence. Hajime was certain the information was received after looking at Aiko's appearance. And because he had no more business, he immediately turned his heels and walked towards the door. Behind him, Aiko told him about a certain student she remembered when they talked about the Orcus dungeon.

"Shirasaki-san still hasn't given up on you."

"…"

Hajime stopped walking because of the unexpected words from Aiko. Then, Aiko spoke softly with Hajime's back in front of her.

"Although everyone believed you were dead, she is the only one who didn't give up on you. Before she confirms it with her own eyes, she believes you are still alive. Even now, she's still fighting in the Orcus Great Dungeon. Even though Amanokawa-kun and the others are only going to the dungeon for training, her only purpose is to search for you."

"… Is Shirasaki okay?"

After a long silence, Hajime asked Aiko. Hajime who took an indifferent attitude towards them, began to ask about another with words of concern. Aiko, who discovered that the original Hajime still existed, displayed a joyful expression.

“Y-Yes. Although the Orcus Great Dungeon is a dangerous place, her ability has developed well, and she continues to conquer the dungeon. Sometimes letters come from her. Are you curious about her? Nagumo-kun and Shirasaki-san got along after all.”

Aiko talked with a bright smile, but Hajime only expressionlessly looked back over his shoulder without denying or affirming anything.

“Although I didn’t mean it like that… it’s good if you tell her this when you exchange letters. What she should be cautious of is not the demonic beasts in the dungeon. It’s her companions.”

“Eh? What do you…”

“Sensei, I can already guess the situation from the attitude of Tamai and the others today. The cause of me falling in battle against the Behemoth, you think it was just an accident « … », right?”

“Th-That’s… Yes. Some magic went out of control and resulted in accidental friendly-fire… Nagumo-kun still holds a grudge against everyone after all…”

“I don’t think of anything like that. The thing I want to say is this. Friendly fire? That’s wrong. That was a magic bullet clearly specifically cast with me as target.”

“Eh? Specifically cast? Targeted, you say?”

Aiko’s expression said she couldn’t understand what he meant. But, Hajime left words that mercilessly pushed Aiko’s worry further.

“It means, a classmate was trying to kill me.”

“Kh!?”

Aiko was stunned and her face paled, “I only know that the culprit is someone related to Shirasaki, it’s someone who’s able to kill another person out of envy. Because she is still okay, it’s good to advise Shirasaki to be careful of an attack from behind.” After leaving this message, Hajime went out of the room.

Shin, there was an illusion of cold wind blowing inside the room, and Aiko embraced her own body with both arms. There was a possibility that one of her precious students tried to kill a companion. Furthermore, they used a cowardly method by aiming at his back when he was at the brink of death. For Aiko, who treasured her students, it was something she couldn’t accept easily. But, she couldn’t deny Hajime’s words without any evidence. Her mind that wanted to believe her students clashed with each other.

With her worries deepening, Aiko’s sleepless night increased.

Arifureta: Volume 6 Chapter 7

Chapter 57 of the Web Novel.

The Northern Mountain Range Area

Daybreak.

With the waning moonlight, the eastern sky began to lit up. Hajime, Yue, and Shia, these three people completed their travel preparations, and soon they would leave the “Water Fairy Inn.” In their hands were packaged riceballs that could be eaten as they move. Even though it was still early in the morning, no one wore unpleasant faces as Foss prepared their breakfast. It was just as expected of a high-class inn. Its management was admired even by Hajime and his party, as they thanked him without reserve once they received the breakfast.

Within the morning mist, Hajime and his party faced towards Ul’s northern gate. There was a highway that stretched from this place to the northern mountain range area. It would take at least a full day by horse, but they would arrive in three to four hours using the magic-driven two-wheeler.

It was the fifth day since they had lost contact with Will Kudeta and his party, who had gone to investigate northern mountain range area. Survival was hopeless. Hajime also thought Will and his party’s odds of survival were low, but there was still a chance. Ilwa’s image of Hajime would climb to a pinnacle if he brought him back alive, which was why he began searching as soon as possible. Fortunately, the weather was good. An ideal day to search

for someone.

With sounds of activity beginning to resound inside the buildings, they advanced towards the northern gate, and could finally see the gate. He narrowed his eyes because he could sense signs of people near the northern gate. They didn't move or anything, but only hung around the gate.

What he saw through the morning mist… … were Aiko and the six students.

"… … Although I can guess what you want, let me hear it anyway… … What are you doing?"

Hajime and his party looked at Aiko and the students with half-opened eyes. For a moment, Aiko twitched from the pressure in the atmosphere, but she still faced Hajime with a firm attitude. After having a discussion, the students; Sonobe Yuka, Sugawara Taeko, Miyazaki Nana, Tamai Atsushi, Aikawa Noboru, and Kawahara Akira, drew near Aiko.

"We are also going. You're searching for missing people, right? It's better to have more people."

"No. I am okay with you going. But, I refuse to go together."

"Wh-Why?"

“Simply because our pace is different. I don’t want to match your slow speed.”

If one were to look closely, they would notice that there were several horses readied behind Aiko and the others. For a moment they thought, “Was it because he cannot ride horses?”, as they doubted Hajime. Since it was trivial, he just let it go through their heads. No matter whether he could ride it or not, its speed couldn’t compare to the magic-driven two-wheeler, after all. However, the virtual leader of Ai-chan’s royal guard who loved her; Sonobe Yuka, snapped at Hajime’s objection. Apparently, she had forgotten her debt and intimidation from Hajime yesterday because of the strength of her love towards Ai-chan.

“Wait, how could you say that? Even if Nagumo doesn’t think well of us, there’s no need to involve Ai-chan sensei.”

Because of the incredibly irrelevant objection, Hajime let out, “Haa?”, with an amazed expression. Hajime thought it’d be a hassle to explain, so he silently took out the magic-driven two-wheeler from “Treasure Box”.

Suddenly, a big bike appeared from the void, Aiko and the students could only let out stupefied looks.

“Do you understand now? Yesterday I said that I absolutely don’t care about whatever you guys want to do. That’s why there’s no need to snarl at me. It’s just like I said before, our speed is different.”

The magic-driven two-wheeler's profound form, and maybe because it was an existence that didn't belong in this different world, made Aiko and the onlooking students speechless. There, the bike-lover in the class; Aikawa asked Hajime while somewhat excited.

"D-Did Nagumo make this just like the gun from yesterday?"

"Something like that. We are going now, so move aside."

Hajime answered him perfunctorily as he was about to embark, but Aiko kept standing still. Aiko wanted to tag along with Hajime and his party no matter what it took. She had two reasons. One was to search for the truth about what Hajime said last night. Aiko couldn't just overlook the words, "A classmate was trying to kill him", so she wanted find out if it was the truth or just Hajime's misunderstanding. If it was the truth she wanted to know what Hajime was going to do. She wanted to hear more details from Hajime for the sake of avoiding any accidents that might happen in the future. Once the search ended, she didn't know when she'd be able to meet Hajime and his party again, so she mustn't miss this chance.

The other reason was, because Shimizu Yukitoshi was currently still missing. Although they had tried to find any scrap of information without leaving even a stone unturned, there were no sightings of him in any of the nearby towns and villages. However, because there was no one living in the northern mountain range area in the first place, she remembered there was no information gathered there. Even if it was on his own accord or by accident, she naturally never thought he'd enter the northern mountain range

area. But with the thought he'd left on his own, she thought of searching for Shimizu's trail while Hajime and his party looked for the missing people.

By the way, it was partly a coincidence that Sonobe and the other students were here. Aiko had wanted to go to the gate earlier than Hajime, in order to ambush him, so she tried to leave the inn before dawn, only to be seen by Sonobe Yuka who was going to the toilet. Because Aiko equipped herself with travelling gear and tried to leave at such an unreasonable time, Sonobe Yuka of Ai-chan's bodyguards questioned her without letting her tell a lie. As the result, because they couldn't just leave Ai-chan to the changed Hajime. Sonobe woke up all of the students and tried to join the search mission. It should be noted that they had left a letter to the Knights, telling them to watch the house, since it seemed like they would only strike up more trouble if they went with Hajime and his party. Though it wasn't known how they'd react…

Aiko drew near Hajime and whispered her decision to him. Hajime moved his face close to Aiko's because he didn't want the contents and only the contents to be heard by others, but when he looked carefully he noticed she used thick makeup to conceal dark shadows. Surely, she was hardly able to sleep having heard Hajime's story.

"Nagumo-kun, because sensei is a teacher, it's necessary to hear the details from Nagumo-kun. That's why, I won't let you go until you tell me everything, I'll chase you if you try to run away. For Nagumo-kun, won't that be troublesome? I don't care if you tell me while we are travelling or when we are searching, so will you spare some time? If you do that, then it'll be as Nagumo-kun said, it'll be good bye after this town… … for the time being."

Hajime could see the light of determination in Aiko's eyes, and he slightly regretted his last words from last night resulted in this failure. He understood Aiko's ability to take action (Although she's often idle). If he tried to deceive her or run away, she'd likely use the Guard Knights to search for him.

He averted his gaze from Aiko and looked up at the sky, which was becoming more and more bright. Without throwing away the possibility of Will's survival, he regretted time had passed while they argued. Hajime let out a deep sigh. He admitted that he'd just reaped what he'd sown, and faced Aiko again.

"Okay. I'll let you go with us. Even though I say that, I don't have time to speak with you…"

"I don't care. I only want to hear it from Nagumo-kun's mouth."

"Haa, geez, sensei won't give up at all. Whatever and wherever, always a teacher, huh."

"Of course!"

Aiko, "Munh!", stuck out her chest with a joyful look when Hajime gave up. Because it seemed the negotiations had gone well, the students showed relieved looks.

"… … Hajime, are you going to bring them?"

“Aa, this person is a “teacher” even here. She will not compromise anything regarding her students. If I just leave her, it’ll absolutely become troublesome in the future.”

“Ho～, she is a good teacher who thinks of her students～”

Because Hajime had given up, Yue and Shia were surprised and asked him. Following that, having heard Hajime’s words accompanied with a bitter smile, the eyes with which they looked at Aiko, had changed slightly. They were filled with some respect. Even Hajime thought Aiko’s attitude as their “teacher”, which couldn’t be shaken at all was not a bad thing. For example, she didn’t find any value in categorizing the classmates and students, so he thought of her as an adult who should be respected.

“But, this bike can only hold three people, right? What should we do?”

What Sonobe pointed out was the truth. It was out of the question in regards to time, to match the horses’ speed, and it was impossible to leave Yue or Shia behind to bring Aiko instead. Reluctantly, Hajime put the magic-driven two-wheeler into “Treasure Box”, and pulled out the magic-driven four-wheeler in its stead.

Pinpon, Hajime made it vanish and at the same time a big object appeared, probably because they knew he’d used an artifact, Aiko and the students were not surprised at all. Having seen the current Hajime, who on Earth could imagine he was once called “incompetent.” Sonobe and the students received the message

“Those who are unable to get on will be in the carrier”, looked at Hajime who quickly got on the driver’s seat with complicated expressions.

* * *

They moved forward on the road expanding straight into the northern mountain range area using the hummer-like magic-driven four-wheeler. Even though the highway was a bad road, thanks to the suspension and ground transmutation feature it shared with the two-wheeler, most of the impact was nulled. Naturally, the male students, aboard the hard metal luggage carrier attached to the back didn’t seem to be in discomfort.

By the way, although there was the “Treasure Box”, the reason he specifically installed the carrier was because it was a set with the gatling that’d be used while driving, it was his aspiration. A small commitment from Hajime.

For the seating inside the vehicle, Hajime naturally sat in the driver’s seat, while Aiko sat at his side and Yue was next to her. Aiko sat beside Hajime for the sake of hearing his story. Although Aiko seemed to not have told it to the other students, she wanted to hear about it sooner.

Originally, the seat next to Hajime belonged to Yue, but Yue already knew the contents of the story Hajime would tell, so reluctantly, she gave her seat to Aiko. But, Aiko and Yue were small, so there was still a considerable amount of space in the seat.

In contrast, Shia who was seated in the back seat looked slightly cramped. Shia aside, Sonobe and Sugawara had voluptous bodies, so they took up a lot of space. The slender Miyazaki looked so uncomfortable.

But, the one who felt the most uncomfortable was Shia. She had been placed between Sonobe and Sugawara for a while now, and they interrogated her about her relationship with Hajime. Love between different races in another world was something female high schoolers wouldn't miss hearing. They were so curious that they repeatedly asked Shia, and the flustered Shia tried her best to answer their questions.

On the other side, Hajime and Aiko's conversation also reached its climax.

Having heard the situation in detail about that time from Hajime, while she knew the possibility of magic being fired intentionally was high, Aiko was still unable to believe it and was troubled by it. When he heard her, Hajime only snorted as his reply.

For now, he already guessed it was someone like Hiyama, and although Hajime's guess was closest to the right answer, he only said this was one of the possibilities. After all, Aiko wouldn't be able to arrive at such a conclusion, and even if the culprit could be specified, how could she restore the mind of someone who attempted murder? How could one compensate for that? She was troubled, with those thoughts on her mind.

She groaned because she was troubled by this, but due to the soft seat and vibrating vehicle inviting her to sleep Aiko started off on her journey to the world of dreams before she was aware of it,

zuruzuru, her body slipped until she fell onto Hajime's lap.

Normally, he'd send her flying because it's a hindrance, but because he felt it awkward to act rude toward Aiko, he hesitated over what to do, then he decided to leave her as is. After all, Hajime's information was the main cause of Aiko's sleep deprivation. So if it's just this, he felt that it couldn't be helped, as he displayed unusual generosity.

"… … Hajime is gentle to Aiko."

"… … Well, it is someone I'm indebted to, so something like this is okay."

"… … Fu~n."

"Yue?"

"… …"

"Yue-san, please don't ignore me."

"… … Next, I will also use the lap pillow."

"… … Okay."

Even though Aiko was still lap pillowed, Hajime and Yue were able to enter a world of their own. In the back seat, the female high schoolers watched them while going “kya kya,” followed by a sulking rabbit-eared girl. From now on, they were entering a dangerous zone where unknown accidents might occur but no one thought about it as they made such a noise.

* * *

The northern mountain range area.

Several mountains extended with altitudes ranging from 1000 to 8000 meters. Plants and trees were somehow able to grow there. It was a mysterious place with a scattered environment. The colour would make one remember the mountains of Japan in autumn, and the other area was filled with trees with fresh green leaves, just like in mid-summer, but there were also places with withered trees in contrast.

Moreover, even if one could see past the mountain range, another mountain range stretched out beyond it. There were more and more of them to the north. Currently four such mountain ranges were confirmed, and beyond that was a completely unknown area. As to how far it went, a certain adventurer aimed to cross the fifth mountain range, however, demonic beasts got stronger and stronger with every passing mountain range, and in the end, there was no sign of success.

Incidentally, the highest mountain was the “God Mountain”. Currently, the place Hajime and the others had first arrived in

when they came into this world was 1,600 kilometers east of the God Mountain. The vivid colors of red and yellow of the fresh leaves on the trees made them easy on the eyes. If a knowledgeable person were to look carefully, he would find spices and edible plants in the area. They were what enriched Ul town, a truly bountiful mountain.

Hajime and the others stopped the four-wheeler at the foot of the mountain, and were charmed by the artistic display of nature's magnificent colors for a while. One of the girls let out a "Ho～". Some time ago, Aiko was apologizing while blushing, after making the blunder of sleeping in a student's lap. But having seen the fresh scenery, she succeeded in placing the 'black history' into the far recesses of her mind.

Hajime also wanted to slowly appreciate this, so he put the four-wheeler back into the "Treasure Box", and pulled out certain things in its stead.

Those were, imitation models of birds which spanned 30 cm each, and a ring with a small crystal embedded on it. Each of the models had a gray crystal buried in a part of their heads.

Hajime put on the ring, took out four identical models, and slowly threw them into the air. With that, one would assume they'd fall due to gravity. However, these fake birds were floating in place. Aiko and the students let out an "Ah".

The four mechanical birds began to turn around on their spots and flew towards the mountain.

“Umm, those are….”

Having seen the model birds flying away without any sound, Aiko represented the other students and inquired something of him.

Hajime answered her with “Unmanned Reconnaissance Planes”, and just like the vehicles and gun, they were items that were out of place in this different world..

The imitation model of birds called “Unmanned Reconnaissance Planes”, were something Hajime made in reference to the remotely operated Golem Knights from Raisen’s Great Dungeon. They were also produced using the materials he got there. Using Creation magic, he granted minerals Gravity magic because he didn’t have the aptitude for using the magic himself, and they became minerals capable of neutralizing gravity as they floated. And thus, gravity stones were created. Furthermore, the induction stones which used to control the Golem Knights were used. In addition, Farsight crystals were also installed in each part of their heads. The mineral used in the eyes of Golem Knights were Farsight stones. Similar to induction stones, it was a mineral capable of reflecting scenes witnessed by other fragments of the crystal, regardless of distance, so long as the same type of magical power was supplied to them. It seemed this was what Miledi used to determine the detailed position of Hajime and his party. Hajime installed the farsight crystal inside his magic eye, and he became capable of seeing scenery the “Unmanned Reconnaissance Planes” could see.

In the first place, there’s a limit to the processing performance of a human’s brain, using four simultaneously was the limit, allowing them to move around in the sky. It’s a complete mystery as to how Miledi was able to operate 50 Golems at once.

Tentatively, His brain's processing performance had been boosted when he awakened the"Light Speed", if he only had to control one plane, he could do precise movements. Moreover, when he uses "Light Speed", he could make seven planes do precise movements within a certain time limit.

This time, he took out the Unmanned Reconnaissance Planes because being able to search from the air is useful, since the scope of search was too vast. Having watched the Unmanned Reconnaissance Planes fly far away, Aiko and the students tried to stop being surprised by Hajime's actions, however, it was a vow that might never be fulfilled.

Hajime and the others advanced into the mountain using the same path used by the adventurers. The sighting information of demonic beasts were just slightly beyond the other side of mountain path. It's in the vicinity of the sixth and seventh mountain. Because of that, Will's party of adventurers should be investigating around those parts. Having thought of this, they quickly advanced through the mountain path at a high pace, after Hajime released the Unmanned Reconnaissance Planes in that area.

Hajime and the others reached the sixth mountain in almost an hour, and stopped. The reason was because it was necessary to search for any traces around the area…

"Haa haa, i-is it a break… … kehoh, haa haa."

"Zee— zee— Are you okay… … Ai-chan sensei, zee— zee—"

“Ueppu, is it okay to rest now? Haa haa, it’s okay, right? I’ll take a break now, kay?”

“… … Hyuu— Hyuu.”

“Geho geho, Nagumo-kun and his party are monsters….”

Aiko and her students had less physical strength than what he had expected, so it was necessary to take a break. Naturally, Aiko and her students’ statuses were originally several times higher than the average people of this world, so they didn’t get exhausted until they climbed the sixth mountain. It’s just that the movement speed of Hajime and his party was just too fast, that’s why they climbed the mountain using all their might, and when they noticed it, their physical strength was exhausted and their legs became wobbly.

Aiko and her students desperately gasped for breath on all fours, and Hajime glanced at them with a somewhat troubled look. In any case, he had decided it was necessary to search the surroundings, as they went to the nearby river to let them rest. He was able to determine the location because of the information from the Unmanned Reconnaissance Planes. After stating the location to Aiko and her students, who were still breathing roughly, he and his party advanced towards the river. The probability of Will’s party having rested there was also high.

With Yue and Shia in the lead, they strayed from the mountain path and onto the mountain. Rustle, rustle. The sound of fallen leaves was enjoyable as they continued to walk between the trees, and before long they could hear the sound of a river. It was a

sound pleasing to the ears. Shia's ears swayed happily.

Finally Hajime and his party reached the river. It was at a bigger scale compared to a small river. Shia, who held the highest search ability, observed the surroundings while Hajime once again used the Unmanned Reconnaissance Planes to search for any presences, and there was no sign of demonic beasts nearby. They relaxed for now. Hajime and the others were sitting on the rock in the riverbank, then they talked about their search plans. Yue took off her shoes and put her feet into the river after saying "Just a little". It was her selfishness to enjoy the moment. Hajime overlooked it because Aiko and her students still hadn't caught up to them. He's a man who spoiled Yue. Shia also took this chance.

Having thought of a possibility, they moved upstream along the riverbank. Hajime moved the Unmanned Reconnaissance Planes upstream while he looked at Yue, pasha pasha, playing with the river water with her bare feet. Although Shia was also barefooted, she only put them in the water. The feeling of the river flowing seemed to tickle her.

Aiko and her students, who finally regained their breaths, arrived. They stayed in place as they stared at Hajime and his party. However, the three male students shouted "Is this Heaven?", with sparkling eyes as they saw the barefooted Yue and Shia, while the female students returned to look at them with cold eyes. It made the male students shudder. When they noticed the gazes from Tamai and the others, Yue and Shia got out of the river.

Aiko and her students were diligently replenishing their moisture in the riverbank. Because of the displeasing gazes from Tamai and the male students a while ago, Yue and Shia returned slight glares, and the male students trembled as they averted their gazes. Having

seen such a spectacle, Aiko and the female students looked at Hajime with warm eyes. Especially Sonobe and the female students. Since they had heard various things from Shia, they wore very annoying expressions.

“Fufu, Nagumo-kun truly treasures Yue-san and Shia-san.”

Aiko said such things while smiling. Hajime wanted to say something, but stopped and just shrugged his shoulders when he saw the depressed Sonobe and the other male students. Yue was the one who took action in his stead. As if it were the most natural thing in the world, she suddenly sat on Hajime’s lap.

“… Nn.”

She was so pleased that she entrusted all of her weight to Hajime. It could also be called her proof of trust. Seeing that, Shia, who looked lonely, embraced Hajime from behind. Aiko’s cheeks immediately blushed because a pink-colored space was generated. Sonobe and the female students were shouting, “Kya— kya—”, in excitement. Tamai and the male students ground their teeth.

Hajime being Hajime, without shaking the two off, just averted his gaze. He seemed to be slightly embarrassed. However, Hajime’s expression suddenly sharpened in the next moment.

“… … That is.”

“Nn… … did you find something?”

Having heard Hajime's muttering while he was looking far into the distance, Yue asked him. Because of his appearance, Aiko and the others blinked their eyes wondering what happened.

"On the river's upstream… … is that a shield? Also, there are bags… … it looks like they're still new. It might be a hit. Yue, Shia, let's go."

"Nn…."

"Yes!"

Hajime and his party harmoniously stood up and began to prepare for departure. Aiko and the students actually still wanted to rest, and although they knew they were overdoing it, they couldn't just stand still once they saw that Hajime had found some clues. They laborously raised their still exhausted waists and once again desperately tried to follow Hajime and his party, who were advancing upstream with blistering speed.

At the location Hajime and his party arrived at, just as he confirmed with the Unmanned Reconnaissance Planes, small round shields made of metal and bags were scattered around. However, there were dents on the round shields, and the bags were torn up in the middle with their strings pulled out.

Hajime and his party carefully examined their surroundings. Then they found some nearby trees with their barks peeled off of them

They were roughly at the two meters of height. It was apparent that the bark was in such state because something had scratched it off, and at that height, it clearly wasn't the work of humans. Hajime instructed Shia to use her search ability to the fullest, while also using his own perception skill as they approached the barkless trees.

Advancing ahead, they found signs of combat one after another. There were trees and branches that were broken in half. There were also plants that had been trampled, and furthermore, there were fragments of blades and blood scattered around. Everytime they found such traces, the expressions on Aiko and the students' faces stiffened. For a while, they chased after the signs of combat, and Shia suddenly found something shining.

"Hajime-san, this, isn't this a pendant?"

"Nn? Aa… … it's probably something they left behind. Let me confirm it."

After he washed off the dirt from the pendant he had received from Shia, he noticed it was not just a pendant but also a locket. He removed the clasp and saw what was inside, it was a woman's photograph. Perhaps, she was someone's lover or wife. Even though it was not a significant clue, it was not an old one but a recent one… … it could belong to someone from the adventurers' party. That's why it'd be kept for now.

Afterwards, they found more articles of the deceased or so they called them, but they only collected items that would allow one to identify their owners. Having searched around for a while, eventually day turned into night, and the time for them to set up

camp was approaching.

Even now, there were no signs of life aside from the wild animals. Although they were cautious because of how Will and his party encountered and were attacked by demonic beasts, there were no sign of demonic beasts in their immediate surroundings. Their current location was between the eighth and ninth mountain. From what was said about crossing the mountains, usually, they would encounter one or two demonic beasts, so Hajime and the others could feel the eeriness of this situation.

After a while, the Unmanned Reconnaissance Planes once again found a location with abnormalities. There were leftovers of great destruction 300 meters to the east. Hajime urged everyone to rush to that location.

There was a big river. A small waterfall could be seen upstream, and the volume of water was immense, with a violent current. Originally, it was likely to flow straight towards the foot of the mountain, but currently, there was a large and small river branching along the way. It was as though it was gouged by a laser or something, from the flank.

The reason they had such impressions was because the gouged part was a straight line, while the surrounding trees and ground were scorched. Furthermore, as if they had received a big impact, a lot of trees were partly broken and thrown tens of meters to the side. On the riverside, there were big footprints measuring more than 30 centimeters.

“It seems the real combat happened here… … These footprints were of large bipedal demonic beasts… … Surely, there were

demonic beast called Brutal beyond the second mountain after this. But, the way the ground was gouged…."

What Hajime described as Brutals were something similar to the Orcs and Ogres in RPG. Although they didn't have high intelligence, they took action as group. Because they had a weaker version of the peculiar magic; "Vajra", called "Strong Wall," they were recognized as quite powerful enemies. They usually descend into the second mountain of the mountain range, but these demonic beasts never came into towns. In addition, they didn't have any attacks that could make such river tributaries.

Hajime thought of the Brutal as he observed the footprints, he hesitated whether to go upstream or downstream. Although Will's party had likely to escaped upstream, he thought it would be hard for them to run upstream after such combat. He doubted that they would physically and mentally run further from town.

Hajime decided to direct the Unmanned Reconnaissance Planes upstream while they head downstream. Even though the Brutals' footprints were on the riverside, the possibility of Will and his party jumping into the river was high. If so, he thought they'd likely be swept away because of physical exhaustion.

The others also agreed with Hajime's speculations, and descended towards downstream on the riverside.

Afterwards, they encountered a much more splendid waterfall compared to the one from before. Hajime and the others nimbly descended from the cliff on the side of the waterfall and landed on the vicinity of the basin. The refreshing wind peculiar to a waterfall healed their minds and bodies which were exhausted

from a day of searching. Then, Hajime felt a reaction from his “Sign Perception.”

” ! This is….”

“… … Hajime?”

Yue immediately reacted and asked him. For a while, Hajime concentrated while closing his eyes. Following that, while slowly opening his eyes, he let out a surprised voice.

“Oi oi, seriously. The Sign Perception picked up something. From the feeling, I can say it’s a human. The location is… … in the interior of waterfall’s basin.”

“You mean there are survivors!”

Hajime nodded towards Shia’s words of confirmation. He answered, “Only one person”, when Yue asked for the number of people. Aiko and her students were also surprised. It was something natural. Although the odds of survival were not zero, they actually didn’t expect any at all. It was the fifth day since Will’s party had gone missing. It was a miracle for even one of them to remain alive.

“Yue, please.”

“… … Nn”

While watching the waterfall basin, Hajime called Yue. Yue was able to guess Hajime's intentions from just those few words, and she shook her right hand as the magic's trigger.

“”Wave Castle,” “Wind Wall”.”

Then, the water in the waterfall and its basin began to split in two just like the Red Sea in Moses' legend. Moreover, the scattered water was perfectly brushed off by the wall of wind. It was the result of water magic making a high-pressure wall of water called “Wave Castle,” and wind magic called “Wind Wall.”

Without chanting, magic of two different attributes were activated at the same time. Having seen how they were used, Aiko and her students, although they didn't remember how many times they had done it, dropped their jaws in astonishment. Surely, the Hebrew people also displayed such expressions.

Because her magic power was not infinite, Hajime urged Aiko and the others on, as he led them into the interior of the waterfall basin's cave. The cave they entered immediately curved upward, and they arrived at quite a large cavity. Water and light poured down from the ceiling, and the fallen water flowed into the water pool below. The reason it didn't overflow was surely because they continued flowing inside.

They discovered a man lying down in the innermost part of the cave. When they arrived at the man's side, they confirmed that he was a young man, around 20 years of age. Although he looked like a noble, he currently looked pale and displayed the complexion of a dead person. However, there was no large injury, and because there was food remaining inside his bag, he was simply sleeping.

His bad complexion was surely related to how he was the only one here.

Having seen the anxious Aiko, and because Hajime wanted to immediately identify the young man's identity, he used his artificial arm, while restraining his power to the limit, to flick the sleeping young man's forehead.

BACHIKONh!!

"Guwah!!"

He screamed as he woke up, the young man writhed while covering his forehead with both hands. Aiko and her students shuddered because of the powerful and merciless forehead flick. Hajime ignored Aiko and the students, and approached the young man with teary eyes to ask his name.

"You, are you Will Kudeta? The third son of Count Kudeta."

"Ah, eh, you are, just how on earth did you guys get here…"

Because the young man only blinked as he couldn't grasp the situation, Hajime once again made a stance to flick his forehead and slowly aimed at it.

"Answer my question. I'll increase the power by 20 percent every time you say something other than the answer."

“Eh, eh!?”

“You, are you Will Kudeta?”

“Umm, uwah, yes! That’s right! I am Will Kudeta! Yes!”

For a moment, when the young man hesitated in answering, Hajime’s eyes gave off a dangerous light, and he immediately thrust out his left hand. The panicked young man immediately announced his name. Apparently, he was truly the person in question. He seemed to have miraculously survived.

“I see. I am Hajime. Nagumo Hajime. I have come here on the request of the head of Fhuren’s branch guild, Ilwa Chang. (For my convenience) It’s good that you’re alive.”

“Ilwa-san!? Is that so. Once again… … I am indebted to that person… …Umm, I am thankful to you. You must be a remarkable person to receive a request directly from Ilwa-san.”

Will voiced gratitude with respectful eyes. It seemed he didn’t mind the forehead flick with unbelievable power from a little while ago. If so, he might be an unexpectedly good person. A great difference than a pig from somewhere. After that, having introduced everyone, they heard the story of what happened to Will.

This was the summary.

Five days ago, Will's party came to the vicinity of the upper part of fifth mountain using the mountain path just like Hajime and the others. Suddenly, they encountered ten Brutals. As expected, they couldn't win against the number of Brutals they encountered, so Will's party tried to withdraw. But, the number of attacking Brutals kept increasing, and they were by the river of the sixth mountain when they noticed it. Then, the Brutals encircled them, so for the sake of escaping from the encirclement. Two people; trifling and unimportant soldiers, were sacrificed After that, when they arrived at a big river, despair appeared.

It appeared to be a jet-black Dragon. As soon as Will's party came along the river bank, the Black Dragon let out breath, and Will was blown off into the river by the attack. From what he saw while being swept away, one person vanished because of the breath, while the other two were attacked from both sides, by Brutals from the back and the Dragon from the front.

Will fell into the basin of the waterfall after he was swept away as is, he went into the cave he had found by chance, and he seemed to have been hiding here ever since.

Somehow, it sort of resembled what may or may not have happened to a certain someone.

Will, as he told them that, was feeling proud of it, and then suddenly started to sob. It was not something unreasonable, the senior adventurers taught him the know-how for adventurers and took care of him even though one of them wore a displeased face. Without confirming their safety, the pathetic him was only able to

tremble in fear and wait for help to come, the him who felt relieved because his rescue came while his companions were dead, various feelings continuously emerged and his tears overflowed.

“I-I am d wost. Wuu, aljo evyone ish ded, I din’t ju anyching. Hikk, fer me chu be d cole curvibor… oso, sniff… chu fil relif… I—!”

(I am the worst. Wuu, although everyone is dead, I didn’t do anything. Hikk, for me to be the sole survivor… Also, sniff… to feel relieved… I—!)

Will’s wails echoed inside the cave. No one could say anything to him. Toward the Will who blamed himself with tears flowing down his face, they didn’t know which words would be good for him. The students looked at Will with sorrowful expressions, while Aiko gently patted Will’s back. Yue was expressionless as usual, while Shia looked troubled.

But, at the moment Will found himself at a loss for words, an unexpected person moved. It was Hajime. Hajime, approached Will and gripped Will’s collar. He used his inhuman strength to hang him mid-air. Following that, towards the Will who was in pain because he couldn’t breathe, Hajime spoke with an unexpectedly permeating voice.

“What is wrong with wanting to live? What is wrong with being glad because you’re alive? That wish and feeling are something natural and inevitable. Even more so because you’re a human.”

“B-but… … I was….”

“Even so, if you’re worried about those who died… … then continue to live. From now on keep living as you struggle, and struggle as if you’re going to die. If you do that, someday… … there might come a day when you understand the reason why you survived today.”

“… … Keep living.”

Even while crying, Will repeated Hajime’s words in blank surprise. Hajime violently threw Will down, he tsukkomi’ed himself with, “What have I done,” his words just now, more than half of them were directed towards himself. Will’s situation was a little similar to his, and for him to belittle his own life was like saying, “It’s wrong for you to survive,” towards Hajime, so he was inadvertently angered.

Of course it was just his persecution complex. More than half of it was said on an outburst of anger, so it wasn’t different from a child’s tantrum. Even though he had seen through various things, Hajime was still a 17 year old boy, and there was still more for him to learn. Hajime knew he had fallen into slight self-loathing. Having seen such a Hajime, Yue came to his side and grasped Hajime’s hand tightly.

“… … It’s okay, Hajime isn’t wrong.”

“… … Yue.”

“… … Live to your best. Keep living on. Together with me, right?”

“… … Haha, ah of course. I’ll keep on living no matter what might happen… … so, don’t leave me alone.”

“… … Nn.”

They left Will who was still talking to himself, then Hajime and Yue created a world with just the two of them. He couldn’t match Yue, and Hajime gently stroked Yue’s cheek, while Yue was also being spoiled and let his hand stroke her cheek. Not understanding what happened to cause such a development, Aiko and her students could only blink, while Shia watched Hajime and Yue with half-opened eyes.

The chaotic situation continued for a while (thanks to Hajime’s recklessness), and somehow everyone managed to regain their senses. The party then decided to immediately descend the mountain. There was still more than an hour before sunset, so if they hurried, they would likely reach the foot of the mountain by the time the sun set.

Although they were concerned about the Brutals and the jet-black Dragon, those were outside Hajime and his party’s mission. It was unthinkable to continue the investigation while having to protect those with low combat potential. Will also understood that he would just be a hindrance, so he understood that they must withdraw. Although the students insisted on continuing the investigation because of their slight sense of justice that came from the troubled townspeople, Aiko stubbornly refused to investigate because of the great danger the Black Dragon and Brutals posed. In the end, they descended the mountain.

However, nothing proceeds smoothly. Once again, they were passionately welcomed when the party got out of the waterfall basin with Yue's magic.

"GUuRURURURU."

Letting out a low groan, with its whole body covered in jet-black scales, its golden eyes glared at them in mid-air while fluttering its wings… … it was the "Dragon."

Arifureta: Volume 6 Chapter 8

Chapter 58 of the Web Novel.

Black Dragon Subjugation?

The dragon's length was at least seven meters. With its whole body covered in jet-black scales, there were five sharp claws on each of its long forelegs. Big wings grew from its back which were slightly shining as they were clad with magic power. Every time it flapped the wings an unbelievable gust of wind appeared, even after taking the size of it's wings into account. However, its most impressive feature was its golden eyes that floated in the night like moons. Its eyes that closed vertically like a reptile's, were dangerously narrowed as they released beautiful light.

The golden eyes were glaring at Hajime and the others from the air. A low groan was leaked from the Black Dragon's throat. Its overwhelming power couldn't be compared to the Hyveria he saw at the bottom of Raisen Grand Canyon's ravine. Although Hyverias themselves were generally recognized as troublesome, high level demonic beasts, when compared to the Black Dragon before them, it was as if they were small birds. Its majestic appearance made it suited as the king of the sky.

Just like a frog being stared at by a snake, Aiko and the others stiffened. Will was especially pale faced and gatagata, trembled as if he would collapse at any moment. Inside his mind, he might be having flashback from when he was attacked.

Hajime had already seen the claw marks from the Black Dragon's

attack that created branches off the river. He thought it must be a very strong demonic beast, but feeling the magic power and pressure from the Black Dragon in front of his eyes, he revised that it was three times of what he had imagine. Remembering the demonic beasts in the Abyss, it was not as strong as the Hydra, but he could feel that it had the same power as class of demonic beasts from 90th floor.

The Black Dragon confirmed Will's appearance and girori, sharpened its glare. Following that, in front of the stiffened humans, it slowly lifted its head and concentrated its magic inside the opened jaws where sharp fangs lined up.

KYUuWAaAAA!!

A mysterious timbre began to dye the sunset and reverberated throughout the mountains. Inside Hajime's mind, he remembered the Breath attack that erased the adventurers on the river.

"Kh! Evacuate!"

Having issued the warning, Hajime immediately leaped away from his location to evacuate. Yue and Shia followed after him. However, some people were unable to react to his warning, no, in this case it could be said most of them.

Aiko, the students, and even Will were stiffened and didn't move from their spots. Aiko and the students' bodies were unable to keep up with such a sudden event, while Will was bound by fear that made him unable to even avert his gaze.

“Tch!!”

“Hajime!”

“Hajime-san!”

Hajime issued an order to Yue and Shia using “Telepathy,” then he suddenly returned to his previous location using “Ground Shrinker” and stood between Aiko’s party and the dragon. Normally, he’d just leave. He didn’t feel bad about abandoning Aiko, rather, he didn’t understand why she came here to search for Will who miraculously survived. But, his “job” was to bring him back if he was alive. That’s why Hajime couldn’t abandon him.

Hajime took out a two meters, coffin-like, large shield from the “Treasure Box” into the empty space, he thrust his left arm and linked it to the shield. As he poured his magic power, on the lower part of the shield gashun!, a stake appeared. Following that, it mightily pierced the ground.

Immediately, a straight, black, laser-like Breath fired from the dragon. The Breath didn’t let out any sound and immediately reached Hajime’s large shield. The impact accompanied by a tremendous roar and the heatwave released melted the ground around the large shield.

“Guu! Ooooo!!”

Hajime let out a roar filled with spirit as he resisted the Breath's pressure. Before one was aware, Hajime's body and the large shield let out bright red light. It came from Hajime's "Vajra." However, the Breath seemed to carry greater power, so after he resisted it for a while, his defense was penetrated as the large shield received a direct hit.

Even so, the large shield still endured the Breath. Power that penetrated Hajime's "Vajra" and heat gradually melted its surface, and it'd fall apart at any time, but Hajime used "Transmutation" to restore it. He wouldn't let any more breakthrough than this.

The stake that penetrated the ground to fix his location was defeated by the pressure, as he gradually pushed back. Hajime transmuted his soles into spikes, and once again, Hajime used Vajra to resist the Breath. The large shield was connected to his outstretched left arm, and he also affixed his right arm to it.

The large shield Hajime took out was using Taur ore as its main material while Star ore was placed in-between and the exterior was coated with Azanthium. Because Hajime was a Transmutation Master, even with an attack that exceed Azanthium's durability, it's possible to restore it if it could endure even for a few seconds. Even if that was penetrated, the Star ore in the second layer had a nature to strengthened if supplied with magic power, and Hajime's magic power wouldn't allow anymore penetration.

That's why, the Breath that could exceed Azanthium wouldn't be able to destroy the large shield. However, it couldn't be said that power wouldn't be able to blown the large shield's user away. In fact, Hajime who possessed inhuman power was gradually pushed

back. On the ground were the gouged out marks from the large shield's stake that pierced it and Hajime's feet.

If this keep up, Hajime who equipped with large shield and "Vajra," along with his inhuman endurance wouldn't receive considerable damage. But if Hajime lost the shield, Aiko and the others would fall prey to the breath, and disappear from this world without even leaving a speck of dust behind.

When Hajime became somewhat impatient, an unexpectedly soft feeling was transmitted to his back. As he stole a glance over his shoulder, somehow, Aiko had jumped towards his back and supported him desperately. Apparently, while Hajime was resisting the Breath, she regained her senses and jumped to support Hajime who was gradually being pushed back. Having seen that, the students and Will also jumped to support Hajime, in panic.

The Breath continued even now. The surrounding water in the river was evaporated by the heatwave, the soil and stones on the riverbank were blown away by the impact and in awful state. From the time he received the direct hit from the Breath, a little time had passed. Hajime felt it had happen for an eternity, but actually no longer than ten seconds had passed. While he grit his teeth and thought about it, finally, he heard the long-awaited voice.

""Cursed Sky"."

At the moment the magic's name was announced, a black, swirling orb of four meters in diameter appeared above the Black Dragon. The deep darkness that could suck in anyone who saw it, immediately fell and crushed the Black Dragon into the ground.

“GuuRUaAAA!?”

A roar came as the Black Dragon sprawled on the ground, and its Breath was interrupted when it raised a scream from the impact. However, the swirling orb, as if saying that’s not enough, didn’t disappear and exerted extreme pressure on the Black Dragon, sinking it into the ground.

“Cursed Sky”

It was Yue’s Gravity magic. By creating a swirling gravity ball, it crushed its target using supergravity that was proportional to the amount of consumed magic power. It was a convenient magic that could change its direction using the gravitational force.

The Gravity magic didn’t consume much magic power if targeted towards the caster itself. However, if the gravity ball was used to attack things, space, and other people, just like what happened just now, it consumed huge amount of magic power and Yue at the least need ten seconds to prepare it. Because Yue herself still hadn’t completely master this magic, the invocation time and magic consumption could still become much more efficient by training.

The sky king was crucified on the ground, it painfully braced its limbs to somehow escape from the pressuring attack. But, immediately following that were the rabbit ears that came fluttering from the sky and Shia was shouting, “Stop～!”, as she fell together with Doryukken. Holding the sledgehammer which was further accelerated by outburst, she used the high-stance aimed at the Black Dragon’s head.

DOoGAaAAA!!!

The impact was incomparable to any impact that had happened before. At the moment of impact, the ground burst and flew radially, accompanied by a thundering sound, it created a crater that looked like a result of a bombing. That was thanks to Doryukken's remodelling by Hajime. Gravity magic was granted to the compressed Azhantium that was the main material. However, it was not the one that "neutralized" like the ones in the unmanned reconnaissance planes, but the opposite where the ore could "increase its weight." The weight increased according to the amount of magic power supplied. The current Doryukken was just like *****ton Hammer!, just like the one inside the manga.

Furthermore, those who received the ultra-heavy blow wouldn't be able to escape from serious damage. That's right, if it was directly hit….

"Guruaaa!!"

Together with the Black Dragon's roar, a flame bullet approached Yue at tremendous speed from inside the dust that scattered by Doryukken. Yue immediately did an emergency evasion by "falling" to the right. However, the gravity ball magic was canceled instead.

The dust was cleared up as the after-effect of the previous flame bullet, and there was the Black Dragon who managed to evade Doryukken which sunk to the ground by a paper-thin margin. At the moment of impact, it seemed to somehow evade using the

peculiar strength of a dragon. Having its restraints removed, the Black Dragon did one rotation in high-speed as if trying to dispel its grudge and its large mass of a tail hit Shia who was just pulling out Doryukken.

“Agh!!”

By a hair’s breadth, Shia used Doryukken as a shield and jumped back to kill the impact, because she was greatly blown away at the same time, she disappeared into the trees.

The Black Dragon used the momentum from the rotation and recovered its posture, and its golden eyes were glaring at Hajime… … not, just passed towards Will behind him. Hajime immediately put the large shield back into “Treasure Box,” then pulled out Donner-Schlag and fired them. Many roars resounded, accompanied by flashes that cut through the sky and attacked the Black Dragon. Without being able to evade, the Black Dragon received direct hits from the storm of destruction, blown away from its spot, and thrown into the river with a tremor, creating a magnificent sprays.

Because Hajime thought it’d be bad for Will to be in its line of fire, he charged at the Black Dragon. Using gunspin in mid-air to reload Donner-Schlag in his hands, he repeatedly fired in succession just like before. However, the Black Dragon got up accompanied with roar that scattered the river’s water, somehow, it ignored Hajime and fired a flame bullet that was aimed at Will.

“Kh!”

Because it aimed at Willl, Hajime dared to approach it and tried to attack furiously to gain its attention. But, the Black Dragon acted as if it didn't even care if Hajime was there, continue to target Will.

"Yue!"

"Nh "Wave Castle"."

"Hih!", was the miserable scream that came from the cowering Will, and in front of him was high-density wall of water. The flame bullet was obstructed by the rampart-like wall of water created by Yue and disappeared. And, at that time, the students finally regained their senses from this raging development and began to chant their magic. They were trying to support the party. Quickly, fire bullets and wind blades rushed towards the Black Dragon as they created archs.

However….

"GOoAAA!!"

The impact from the dragon's roar dispersed the attacks. Moreover, having heard the tremendous roar and stared by the golden eyes, Will let out similar "Hih," scream as he backed away and fell on his butt, reaching the female students' spot.

Hajime, who completely judged her to be outside of the combat assets, shouted at Aiko to escape. Aiko was hesitating. Hajime was

also Aiko's student after all, so to left him in front of this powerful demonic beast made her hesitate as a teacher.

At that time, the Black Dragon began to flap its wings and flew into the sky while blowing the surroundings river water away. In addition, it rapidly shot flame bullets at Will.

Although Hajime had fired the railguns in quick succession, he couldn't get its attention at all. The Black Dragon's scales, similar to scorpion-like thing that boasted its hardness in the past, was only slightly scratched even after receiving direct hits from the railguns.

The Black Dragon stubbornly targeted Will. It was as if it was being manipulated by something. It faithfully obeyed the order like a robot. It kept trying to kill Will even after being restrained by gravity before, it seemed to think nothing of those who tried to obstruct it.

Although Hajime didn't understand why it obstinately targeted Will, it was a convenient thing, since its target was already decided, so he gave out an instruction to Yue.

"Yue! Protect Will! I'll defeat this guy!"

"Nh, leave it to me!"

Hearing Hajime's instruction, Yue immediately "fell" towards Will,

and stood in front of him. When she snuck a look at her back, irritation surfaced when she saw Aiko and the students who couldn't move well in this situation and she muttered in displeasure.

"… … If you don't want to die, hide behind me."

The students were trivials, but regarding Aiko, Hajime was at least concerned about her, so she let out those words to not let her die. Incidentally, she had already forgotten how Aiko became a hindrance to them.

The students moved closer to Yue without particularly reacting to Yue's cold words. They realized by Yue's side was the safest place, thanks to the rampart of ice that chantlessly constructed using the surrounding moisture.

Normally, they'd have the ability to fight some more. But, no matter even if they knew Hajime was alive, the day they were almost killed by the Behemoth and Traum Soldiers as well as how Hajime fell to his "death" into the abyss still traumatized their minds. They followed Aiko because even if they couldn't join the hero group in the dungeon, they couldn't just half ass things.Even so, their magic was ineffective against the Black Dragon, coupled with the roar filled with killing intent, made their heart completely withered. Their mental state was completely unsuited for combat.

Because Yue was there, Hajime was assured of Will's safety, and concentrated on attacking. The flying Black Dragon was concentrating on destroying Yue's defensive wall, as it targeting Will on the other side of the wall, even now. However, flame bullets were incapable of penetrating the wall, then it raised its

head in an arch again as it realized it. It began to focus magic power inside its mouth.

“Hah, it’s the first time I’ve been ignored this far… … that’s why, I’ll do anything to make you not ignoring me!”

As Hajime put back Donner into its holster, he took out Schlagen from the “Treasure Box.” Immediately after he activated “Lightning-clad,” the three meters weapon with an atrocious form let out bright red sparks. As expected, the Black Dragon realized Hajime’s next move was a dangerous one, and it turned its mouth, aiming at Hajime. It was just like Hajime had predicted: it couldn’t ignore him.

At the same time the Black Dragon fired the death spreading Breath, Hajime’s Schlagen finished the loading and fired.

They let out the same extreme flash. They became a storm of death. Black and red aurora were clashing against each other. At the moment of collision, a terrific shock wave was generated and the surrounding trees were blown away. Just by power alone, they were probably equal. However, the two auroras clearly divided between the victor and the loser from their nature. Although the Breath continued to let out an excellent aurora, Schlagen was specialized in penetrating through a single point. Therefore, the Breath was inevitably broken through, and that power reached the Black Dragon.

The head of the Black Dragon which fired the Breath suddenly curved upward. The full-metal jacket made out of star ore penetrated the Breath and hit the dragon’s opened mouth. However, the wound was far from a mortal one. With the bending

of the Breath's trajectory and power, several of its sharp fangs evaporated and as it nearly passed through the side of its head, it stopped before one of its wings on its back was blown off.

"GURUaAAA!!"

The Black Dragon fell as it spun towards the ground and let out a pained scream. Hajime was fortunately able to evade the Breath using "Aerodynamic," and while he was upside down in mid-air he used "Aerodynamic"'s "Ground Shrinker." As he dived at high-speed, he used "Grand Leg" to attack the Black Dragon's abdomen.

ZUDONh! The lower abdomen let out a roaring sound from the impact, and the Black Dragon's body folded. The ground was radially cracked by the impact. It couldn't be said that the damage was considerable even though the Black Dragon let out a scream. Its armor was capable of enduring the Railguns after all. However, having assumed that, Hajime attacked further as he greatly held out the artificial left arm. KIiIIIII!!! Machine-like sounds came from the artificial arm. The "Oscillation Smash" he used before fell down.

It was Hajime's fist of destruction that was thrust in high speed and was capable of pulverizing a large boulder in a single blow, and it mercilessly attacked the Black Dragon's abdomen.

DOoGUuUU!!

Along with the muffled sound, the scales on the abdomen were cracked. With the purpose of transmitting the impact, its insides

received considerable damage from this attack, and the Black Dragon raised a pained voice again as it vomited large amounts of blood from its mouth. Maybe because it thought it'd be dangerous if this kept up, the Black Dragon poured its magic power in one of its wings and a windstorm appeared, then it tried to forcefully regain its posture. Once again, Hajime used "Aerodynamic" to evade. He didn't forget to leave a parting gift.

At the moment the Black Dragon turned its golden eyes towards Hajime who escaped into the air, a big explosion occurred under its abdomen. The dragon's gigantic figure flew two meters from the surface from the impact. Hajime's parting gift was a "Grenade."

"KUuWAaAA!!"

Receiving an impact at the same place as before, it couldn't be helped that it was unable to raise a scream and only let out a muffled groan. With its head drooped to endure it, blood was flowing from the Black Dragon's mouth. Somehow, its groan weakened.

Maybe because the Black Dragon recognized Hajime as a threat, it looked away from Will towards Hajime and rapid-fired flame bullets from its mouth. The flame bullets flew through the air as if they were anti-aircraft fire. However, none of the fire hit Hajime. Hajime was using "Aerodynamic" and "Ground Shrinker" simultaneously to freely run in the sky, leaving after-images, Hajime knocked down the Black Dragon using Hit & Away tactic.

He fired Donner-Schlag from medium range at nasty places such as the claws, gums, eyes, tail's base, and butt. In the next moment, he drew closer and used the combo of "Oscillation Smash" from the

shotshell outburst + “Grand Arm” to hit the head and flank.

“KURUu, GUWANN!”

Somewhat, no, the Black Dragon certainly began to give out a weeping voice. With its scales cracked all over the place, a large amount of blood dripped from its mouth.

“Incredible….”

Having watched Hajime’s fight, Tamai Atsushi spontaneously muttered that from the safety area behind Yue. Without having to say it, the other students and Aiko were silently agreeing as they nodded, and they were unable to look away from the overwhelming fight. As for Will, he intensely watched Hajime with sparkling eyes as if he didn’t remember he was trembling in front of the Black Dragon before.

By the way, unbeknownst to them Shia had returned and tried to enter combat, only to be stopped by Yue who had guessed Hajime’s intentions. Currently, she watched him together with Yue by her side. Having been blown away at the beginning, she actually felt somewhat depressed.

Hajime didn’t immediately pull out Schlagen, Orkan, and the others because he thought it was a good chance to show off his fighting prowess to Aiko and the students. Although the Black Dragon was certainly sturdy and the power of one of its attacks was to be feared, it’s easier to attack its huge body if one fought calmly, and its attacks were monotonous. So, it was possible for

him to put into practice “no matter what, it won’t hit,” after all it was an opponent Hajime could go easy on. Because he’d separate from Aiko and the students, to put a hard-line so the Church and Kingdom wouldn’t be relaxed when the heroes received the information from Aiko, he thought of showing off his true power to them.

Because of that, although Hajime completely knocked down the pitiful Black Dragon, he held gratitude towards it in his mind. Even though there were cracks all over the place, none of the scales were completely crushed in the least. Truly significant durability. Because he remembered the scorpion-like thing, to be sure of it, he used “Mineral Appraisal” on the scales and because there was no reaction, it seemed it was a mineral that couldn’t be transmutated.

Slowly, because he thought it was enough to make them understand his true strength, it was about time for the finishing blow. He slipped onto the Black Dragon’s chest in an instant, and kicked with “Grand Leg” to roll him back towards its abdomen. Following that, he pulled out the Pile Bunker from the “Treasure Box” on the Black Dragon’s abdomen.

From the direction of Will and the others, he could hear a clamor but decided to ignore it. The anchors fired, and the arms fixed its location on the Black Dragon. Following that, he released “Lightning-clad.” The reason he chose the Pile Bunker was because he couldn’t pull out all of its power inside the Raisen Great Dungeon, so he wanted to do an actual combat test.

The stake which coated in Azanthium started to rotate intensely inside, and the Pile Bunker let out bright red sparks. If this kept up, the four ton stake would mercilessly end the Black Dragon’s life.

However, just like the proverb “a cornered rat will bite the cat,” a wounded beast was something one should be cautious of. It was the same as the Black Dragon.

“GUuGAaAAAA!!!”

Along with the Black Dragon’s roar, a violent blast was generated towards all directions. It was an explosion made of pure magic power. In addition, using a moment to strengthen its body to the limit and the explosive power from its muscles, the anchors that pierced the ground to fix the Pile Bunker were raised and at the same time it pried open the arms with its muscles. Following that, it turned around in an instant to shake Hajime off.

“Uoh!?”

Hajime instinctively stepped back. The heavy Pile Bunker was, the Pile Bunker that was on the verge of firing was turned to target the sky, and the stake that was accelerated to its max launched into the sky. A straight line that made ones narrow their eyes ascended through the sky, and Hajime who put the Pile Bunker into the “Treasure Box” confirmed the Black Dragon used its last struggle to move towards Will.

“Tch, Shia!”

“Y-Yes”

As he clicked his tongue towards this blunder, Hajime called Shia. Shia, having realized his intentions, jumped towards the sky using the rampart of ice, and let out a yell so she wouldn't be blown away this time. With the free fall and the outburst from the shotshell, she fell towards the Black Dragon just like a meteor.

If it was the normal Black Dragon, it'd be able to avoid it, but the Black Dragon that was literally in its last struggle didn't have room for that, it was unable to avoid the hammer. Shia, who held the ultra-heavy Doryukken in a high-stance, further poured her magic power to explosively increase its weight. Subsequently, it directly hit the crown of the Black Dragon's head without missing an inch as it let out a thundering sound.

The Black Dragon's head sank to the ground, and its lower body floated as it stood on its hands because it was in the middle of a charge. After a moment of stillness, it finally fell down and made the earth tremor.

Shia, who pulled out Doryukken from the Black Dragon's head that was on the ground, was surprised by what she saw. It was something natural. Although the Black Dragon's head was smashed and considerably cracked, it wasn't completely broken. It was truly dreadful durability.

Hajime came towards the Black Dragon from behind. Also, the stake launched from the Pile Bunker pierced the ground between Hajime and the Black Dragon. Hajime knew the sprawled dragon wasn't dead by percepting its presence, next, he suddenly recalled the talk with Mottou about the Ryujin race from before. The one about "kicking a dragon's ass."

Hajime pulled out the stake that pierced the ground using “Grand Arm” and carried it on his shoulder as he positioned himself before the base of the Black Dragon’s tail. Following that, he made a stance just like a javelin thrower. Naturally, in his hand was the Pile Bunker’s stake.

Everyone there was able to guess what Hajime was going to do, and their cheeks convulsed. Even though the scales were troublesome, it shouldn’t be a good thing to thrust it there(¨). Even though Yue, Shia, and the others floated expressions of horror towards Hajime’s mercilessness, Hajime only thought of that as blowing wind.

And finally, Hajime’s Pile Bunker mightily pierced the Black Dragon’s “bleep” and zuburi sound resounded. At that moment,

“Ah— — — nanojyaaaaa — — — !!!”

With its eyes immediately opened wide, the Black Dragon let out a heartbreaking scream as it woke up. In truth, having thrust half of the stake and using his fist to make it pierce further, as expected, even Hajime was surprised by the scream that obviously came from the Black Dragon, and he inadvertently removed his clasped fist.

“Ass is~, this one’s ass is~”

Because of the Black Dragon’s grieving, painful, and somewhat excited tone, everyone let out a “What the heck is this!?” in amazement as they stared at the Black Dragon while stunned.

Apparently, it didn’t end as just a normal dragon subjugation.

Arifureta: Volume 6 Chapter 9

Chapter 59 of the Web Novel.

Tio Clarce

“I-it’s pulling～, it’s pulling out this one’s ass～”

On the mountain side of the northern mountain range, where trees were mowed down and the dried up river was in ruins, a truly miserable voice rang out. It was a woman’s voice. A voice that was not spoken, but rang out just like a wide area version of telepathy. Because a dragon’s vocal chords and mouth were incapable of speaking human words, it definitely used a method to transmit words through air vibrations.

However, it was impossible for demonic beasts to speak in human words in the first place. Currently, the only confirmed case was the human-faced fish from somewhere. Even among the general population, there shouldn’t be an existence such as a demonic beast capable of understanding human language. Furthermore, the existence of the Black Dragon right before their eyes was strange in and of itself. It was the first thing to ever endure so many shots of Hajime’s railguns excluding the ones in Great Dungeons. Moreover, although there were powerful demonic beasts that could fire such Breath, they shouldn’t exist around this place. If they lived here, then the danger should already be widely known.

Therefore, he deduced two possibilities as to why it’s here. First: it was possible this Black Dragon came from further than the fifth mountain range, a completely unknown demonic beast. Following

that, the other one was….

“You… … don’t tell me, are you from the Ryuujin race?”

“Mu? Indeed. This one came from the prideful Ryuujin race. Isn’t that great? Isn’t that amazing? That’s why, although this one wants to pull it out of this one’s ass… … this one’s magic power is about to be cut off. If this one returns to original form in this situation… … it’ll be awful… … this one’s ass will.”

Hajime thought it couldn’t be possible, but the Black Dragon replied, saying he was correct. Hajime was surprised in the “edge” of his mind. Just how many times since he coming to this world did he meet “rare existences.” Yue was from the Vampire race that should have been annihilated in the wars 300 years ago. Shia was the current generation’s atavism, and right before his eyes was the Black Dragon who came from the Ryuujin race, which was believed to have been annihilated more than 500 years ago.

“… … Why are you in this place?”

While Hajime was still surprised, Yue continued to ask the Black Dragon. The Ryuujin race was a legend even for Yue. She was interested in whether or not it was the only living one of its race, just like her. The light of curiosity dwelled in her eyes.

“Well, more importantly, the ass… … the amount of magic power remaining is about… … eh, ah, please stop! Poking it is not good! The stimulation—! The stimulation—~!”

Because the Black Dragon ignored Yue's question, speaking with a delinquent-like attitude, Hajime said, "You dare to ignore Yue's question, Aa?," while using his fist to drive in the stake sprouting from the Black Dragon's butt. With the shock directly spreading inside its body, the Black Dragon let out a scream as it writhed. Its dignified appearance as if it was a death god when they first met was just like an illusion because not even a bit of that remained.

"Just why would the should be perished Ryuujin race be here, attacking mere adventurers… … I also want to hear about that. Normally, I'd just pierce your ass as is, but I'll delay that to hear your story. Well then, tell me briefly."

Hajime thought the actions of this legendary Ryuujin race were too unnatural. Normally he'd be merciless, but he slightly delayed that as he urged it to speak. And he continued to grind the stake with his hand.

"Ah, kuh, stop grinding it~ nanojya~. I-I'll tell you!"

Hajime's action astonished the surrounding others, but Hajime didn't mind them. Because it couldn't talk if he kept it up, Hajime stopped the grinding. However, his hand was still affixed to the stake. The Black Dragon was relieved when the grinding stopped as it let out a sigh. Following that, it began to talk about its circumstances in a somewhat hurried tone. The captivated tone must be just their imagination.

"This one was being manipulated by someone. This one didn't have any intention to attack thou. The temporary master ordered this

one to find the young man over there and his companion and kill them.”

The Black Dragon turned its gaze towards Will. Will was twitching for a moment and his body trembled, then he firmly returned the Black Dragon’s gaze. Having seen Hajime’s fight, he must have settled something.

“What do you mean?”

“Umu, this one will talk in order. This one….”

When the Black Dragon’s talk was summarized, it became something like this.

It seemed this Black Dragon went out of the Ryuujin race’s hidden town for a certain purpose. Its purpose was to investigate the visitors from another world. Although the details were omitted, there was a person with high magic perception inside the Ryuujin race, and it seemed that person perceived a huge magic discharge and some things arrived to this world several months ago.

Although the Ryuujin race had a law which prevented from involving themselves on the surface stage, but just as expected, to leave the the matter of unknown visitors as an unknown was something that’d be dangerous, even for them. After some discussion, they decided to start the investigation.

The Black Dragon before them left the hidden town with the purpose of investigation. Normally, it'd turn into human form after passing the mountain range, then it'd work hard in secretly gathering information, but it thought to rest a little before that, and it seemed to have taken a rest in the vicinity of first and second mountain range. Naturally, it used the Ryuujin race's peculiar magic; "Dragon Form" and turned into the Black Dragon because there were demonic beasts in the surroundings.

And then a man completely covered in black robe from head to toe appeared in front of the sleeping Black Dragon. That man gradually gnawed on the thoughts and mind of the sleeping Black Dragon using the using a variety of brainwashing and suggestion magic from the dark magic system.

Naturally, if that happened it'd usually counterattack. But the Ryuujin race had a bad habit. That's right, it was the one that became the origin of that proverb. Ryuujin race that entered deep sleep in dragon form wouldn't be easily awaken. However, it was as long as no one kicked its ass. Even so, Ryuujin race boasted the toughness of their willpower, so it shouldn't be easy to manipulate it.

Then, for how it was able to be perfectly manipulated. That was….

"That man is frightening. His aptitude in dark magic can be called the level of a genius. That man continuously used magic for one full day. So no matter how strong this one is, this one couldn't endured it after all…."

It's the greatest mistake of this one's life!, was the feeling that came from the Black Dragon's sorrowful voice. However, Hajime just

tsukkomi'ed that with cold eyes.

"In other words, having come here to investigate, how can you not notice magic being used for a full day, just because you're fast asleep?"

Everyone's eyes look somewhat foolish. The Black Dragon turned its gaze towards the day after tomorrow, and it continued its story as if nothing happened. By the way, the reason it knew it took a full day was because it was still conscious even after the completion of brainwashing, and heard the culprit grumbling, "For it to take one full day….".

Afterwards, obeying the robed man, it helped brainwash the demonic beasts in the second mountain range. Then, on a certain day, the Brutal army was moved to the first mountain range, and they encountered Will's party who were undertaking the investigation request. Having received the order to kill any witnesses, it chased after them. This one alone reported to the robed man. For some reason, it seemed it'd be bad if the fact he had brainwashed a lot of demonic beasts was revealed, so he ordered the Black Dragon to do a complete search.

Then, by the time it'd noticed it, it was already knocked down by Hajime, and panicked because she'd be dead if this kept up. That's why it exploded its magic power.

Following that, at the time it was going to do suicide attack according to instructions ingrained in its brainwashed brain. Its consciousness was blown away after Shia's attack. In the next moment, its mind immediately woke up from an indescribable stimulation and impact to its ass. It didn't know whether it was the

blow to its head or its ass that made it regain its senses.

"… … Stop playing around."

Towards the Black Dragon who finished its story came a shaking voice that was desperately trying to suppress its fury. Everyone turned their glances towards that person. With his fists clenched, Will's aimed his anger filled eyes towards the Black Dragon.

"… … Just because you were manipulated… … Gale-san was—, Navarre-san was—, Lento-san was—, Waslee-san was—, Kurt-san was—! Killed but that couldn't be helped you say!"

Apparently, he was angry because he understood why the adventurers were killed. He raised a voice filled with fury towards the Black Dragon.

"… …"

The confronted Black Dragon didn't raise any rebuttal. It just received all of Will's words with calm eyes as it gazed at him. He was unable to stomach that attitude.

"In the first place, your story can't be proven to be true! You most likely made it up because you didn't want to die!"

"… … What was spoken just now is the truth. For the Ryuujin

race's pride doesn't allow this one to lie."

Now, Will tried to argued vehemently. But, Yue intervened.

"… … Surely, it didn't lie."

"Kh, what's your basis for saying that…."

Having glanced at the snapped Will, Yue began to talk as she looked at the Black Dragon.

"… … The Ryuujin race is noble and honest. I've lived much longer from everyone here. That's why I am more familiar with the legend of the Ryuujin race. This one said "For its pride." That's why, it is surely not a lie. Furthermore… … I know if someone has the eyes of a liar."

Yue slightly moved her gaze away from the Black Dragon as she looked at the distance sky. Surely, she was reminded of the event 300 years ago. For the aloof princess, her surroundings had set her up and remembering the result, surely there were a lot of lies involved. Even the most familiar person to her could be called "liars." The result of her constantly looking away from that fact was the "betrayal." Therefore, for Yue, who had experienced the bitterness called the "study of life," her eyes were sensitive to "liars." Although the reason she entrusted herself when she first met Hajime was because there was no other way, and although Hajime never lied to her, when she was reminded of that time, her sensitivity to liars might have been the biggest contributing factor after all.

“Fumu, for someone to still know of the Ryuujin race’s ideals… … No, didn’t thou say a long time ago?”

For someone to still know the ideals of the existence called the Ryuujin race, the Black Dragon’s tone was somewhat joyous.

“… …Nn. I am a survivor of the Vampire race. 300 years ago, I was heard the Ryuujin race was the ideal example of nobility.”

“Wow, Vampire race’s… … Moreover 300 years ago… … Indeed, although this one heard they were dead, thou are the Vampire princess. Surely thy name is….”

Apparently, the Black Dragon was alive for more or less the same amount of time as Yue. Moreover, its words implied that it knew of what had happened in the world. Even now, they might still hide their identities and are investigating the world. But, the Black Dragon seemed surprised that the Vampire Princess had survived. The surrounding, Will, Aiko, and the students were also looked at Yue with eyes of astonishment.

“Yue… … that’s my name. It’s the name I got from my most important person. So, I’d like you to call me that.”

Yue gestured as though she were embracing something closely with both hands as her cheecks blushed faintly. For Yue, the Ryuujin race was an existence that should be taken as an example. So, the edge of her spoken words were filled with respect. That feeling must also have been involved in how she stopped Will’s disparagement.

In Yue's surroundings, an aura of happiness somehow drifted around. Because of the abrupt love talk, the female students wore expressions as though they had eaten something sweet, while the male students were blushing because of Yue's charm as they looked at her. Even Will seemed to have lost some of his vigor.

However, he continued to speak because he still regretted what had happened to the senior adventurers.

"… … Even so, that doesn't change the fact that it killed them,… … but even I don't know what should be done… … Even so—! Gale-san was going to propose when this job ended… … their regrets…"

He knew in his head that the Black Dragon's words weren't a lie. However, he couldn't help but blame it. His heart just couldn't accept it. Inside Hajime's mind, "Once again, a splendid flag was raised huh," with weird admiration. Then he recalled the locket pendant they had picked up on the way.

"Will, is this that Gale's belonging?"

As he said that, he threw the locket pendant to Will. Will received it, he looked at it then he smiled as if he was truly happy.

"This, this is my locket pendant! I thought I had lost it, but you picked it up. Thank you very much!"

“Huh? It’s yours?”

“Yes, it’s not a mistake because there’s mama’s photograph!”

“Ma-Mama?”

His expectation came off splendidly, and the answer even made Hajime’s cheeks cramp inadvertently.

Because the woman in the photograph should be in the first half of her twenties, he was doubtful but he heard, “After all, the photograph of mama in her youth is the best.” as Will answered as if it was some kind of divine revelation. Everyone there realized, “Aa, mama-con huh,” as they wore subtle expressions. The females looked more and more subtle….

By the way, Gale’s other party seemed to be a “man.” Following that, Gale’s fullname was Gale Homoluca. It was just as the say that the name influenced the body.

Maybe because he regained his mother’s photograph, Will considerably calmed down. It’s effectiveness was truly an unknown. But, even if he was calmed down, his grudge and pain didn’t disappear. Will, calmly, insisted to kill the Black Dragon. Moreover, even though it said it was brainwashed, he reasoned that it was completely faking it. His main reason should be revenge.

Then, as if to repent, the Black Dragon spun its words that contained guilt in its voice.

“Even if this one was manipulated, it is true that this one is guilty for plucking the precious life of people. To make up for it, this one will obediently received the judgement. However, this one want you to delayed that for a while. At the very least, until that dangerous man is stopped.That man is trying to make an army of demonic beasts. Although Ryuujin race’s law doesn’t allow any interference against the continent’s fate, this one was responsible. This one can’t just leave it… … This one know it is just this one’s selfishness. But, please somehow overlook that.”

Hearing the Black Dragon words, everyone in that place were surprised when they heard about the army of demonic beasts. Naturally, everyone’s gazes focused on Hajime. These members were naturally looked at their leader. Actually, because Hajime was the one who stopped piercing the Black Dragon, they naturally entrusted the decision to him.

Hajime’s answer was,

“Well, I don’t really know about your circumstance. But, it’ll be a troublesome so I’ll ignore it. Die as an apology.”

He swung the fist of his artificial arm as he said that.

“Wait—! Th-Thou, with the flow of the talk, thou shouldn’t have

done the finishing blow as if no discussion is necessary! Please! This one will apologize without fail! This one don't mind whatever thou do when that matter is over! That's why delay it for now! The afterlife will—!"

Hajime continue to swung his fist as he ignored the Black Dragon's words with cold eyes. However, he couldn't finished that. At the moment he swung it, Yue clung on to Hajime's neck. Surprising him, Yue whispered to Hajime's ears as she instinctively held him.

"… … Are you going to kill?"

"Eh? Well, we were trying to kill each other…."

"… … But, it's not an enemy. Killing intent and malice were never turned towards us. It was deprived of it's will."

Apparently, Yue didn't wanted the Black Dragon to die. For Yue, Ryuujin race was something she yearned for, so she respected it.

Moreover, even though he said they were trying to kill each other, from the beginning, the Black Dragon never turned its killing intent and malice towards Hajime and the others. They understood the reason now. With it's will literally deprived, it only did as ordered just like a machine. Even so, there was no change with how they tried to kill each other. However, in the first place, Will was the only one in the Black Dragon's eyes, and the reason it battled Hajime was because the Black Dragon confronted Hajime's intent to kill.

Further saying, Hajime would be inconvenienced if Will was dead, so certainly it was an enemy because it aimed at Will, but the one behind the Black Dragon was the robed man. Then, if he were to talk about who the enemy was, it'd be more likely to be that man.

Also, there was a reason for her to stop him.

Yue knew Hajime's stance. But, in Yue's eyes, "enemy" that should be killed and the Black Dragon weren't the same thing. Because she was the ruler of the Vampire race, having experienced such things, her eyes wouldn't be mistaken about a person. In Yue's eyes, there were no essence of "enemy" inside the Black Dragon's mind. For Yue, she at least didn't want Hajime to kill things other than the "enemy,"

After all,

"… … If one compromised on the important rule imposed to themselves, one would be broken. Wouldn't your rule changed if you kill the Black Dragon?"

She was worried that Hajime would be "broken" if he killed things beside the "enemy."

Having received Yue's words, Hajime could guess her mind, and he thought more and more carefully if the Black Dragon was the "enemy" as he slightly inclined his neck. Even if it was manipulated, Hajime was not so naive to considered that in a fight

to death. He would have most likely killed it without mercy.

However, after it regained its mind and the brainwashing was dissolved, to purposely execute it with “enemies will be killed,” he thought, isn’t that a deviation?

As she clung on Hajime’s neck, Yue was watching him closely and looked like they’d kiss at any moment, and having thought of that, unexpectedly, it spoke with a quiet desperate tone.

“This one is sorry to intrude on such good atmosphere, but even if thou feel lost, at the very least could thou pull out the stake from this one’s ass? If this keep up, this one will be dead no matter what will happened.”

“Nn? What do you mean?”

“Having received the external thing while in dragon form, at the time this one returned to original form, it’d influence the body as is. Try imagining it. The scene of this stake piercing a woman’s ass… … Do you think this one will survive that?”

Everyone in the area imagined the scene that the Black Dragon said, then “Uwa～,” their expressions cramped. Especially the females, they hold their butts as they turned pale.

“Well, although the dragon form could be maintained using magic power, this one’s magic power almost exhausted. In a minute… …

although it isn't bad to go to a new world, please pardon this one from that kind of death. The afterlife without it unplugged—"

Somewhat, its words seemed anxious, and its tone weakened as if its limit was truly close, and apparently Hajime didn't have more time to think.

Hajime embraced Yue with his right arm, and decided rather than hesitating, he'd go along with his partner words as is. For people, they wouldn't be able to understand their own selves. That's why, it wouldn't be a mistake to choose the direction where his trusted partner wouldn't feel uneasy.

Having thought that, Hajime carefully put his hand on the stake which was stucked in the Black Dragon's ass. Following that, he used his strength to pull it out.

"Haaan! P-Please do it slowly. This one still inex- afuuun. Yah, how intense! If this— Aanh! Comingg, something is coming~"

Because it stuck hard inside, he twisted it for so many times, and he put considerable power while twisting it to pull it out, but somehow the Black Dragon began to let out a captivated voice as it panted. Hajime ignored that voice and pulled it out without any mercy.

ZUBOh!!

“Ahiii— — —!! A-amazing… … Even though this one said to do it gently, to be treated without any mercy… … This is the first time….”

As the Black Dragon muttered unknown things, immediately, its body completely wrapped with cocoon-like, jet-black magic power, and its big size began to decreased. Following that, after it reached the size of a human, the magic power immediately disappeared.

In the place of the black-colored magic power was something collapsed on its feet, and while using one hand to support its body, the other hand was holding its butt. With blushing cheeks, it was a black-haired, golden-eyed beautiful girl. Her glossy, straight, black hair reached her waist and her cheeks dyed bright red, Haa haa, she breathed roughly as if she was in a trance.

Her appearance was in the first half of her twenties, and her height might be around 170 cm. With a splendid proportion one could be proud of. Every time she breathed, a pair of hills were intensely shook as they peeped from inside the clothes’ collar that became disordered as it hanged on her, and it looked like they’d came out at any moment. If Shia was melon, the Black Dragon was watermelon….

The Black Dragon’s real form was a captivating beauty and the males were especially reacted grandly to that. The three male students in adolescent were somewhat slouching. If this keeps up they’d likely go on all fours. The female students were looking at them with eyes as if they were no different from cockroaches.

“Haa haa, umuu, this one still alive… … Although there is still a sense of discomfort on the ass… … this one’s whole body is hurting

in all places… … Haa haa… … for pain to be this sweet….”

The Black Dragon wore a dangerous expression and let out a dangerous words for some reason, then she pulled herself together as she immediately straightened her sitting position and began to introduce herself in such cold atmosphere. Still, she sometimes panted, haa haa, and messed various things, but….

“This one have troubled thou. With all of this one’s might, this one apologize. This one’s name is Tio Clarce. A person that came from the last tribe of Ryuujin race, Clarce tribe.”

The Black Dragon introduced herself as Tio Clarce, next, she talked on how the black robed man was going to attack the town with an army of brainwashed demonic beasts. Their number had reached around 3,000 to 4,000. Also, from the second mountain range, the leaders of groups of demonic beasts were already brainwashed, so he could use the groups more efficiently as his subordinates.

When she said about controlling demonic beasts, it reminded Hajime and the others about the new power of the one called Demon Race in this world. Maybe because Aiko and the students also thought of that, they guessed the black robed man was actually from Demon race.

However, their guess was easily refuted by Tio. After all, the black robed man was black-haired, black-eyed human, and still at the age of a boy. Moreover, from the mouth of the Black Dragon called Tio, who was made as a subordinate to him came the settling words, “That person introduced himself as a hero,” with a tone filled with considerably grudge against the so called hero.

A black-haired, black-eyed human boy, moreover he was someone with genius-like talent on dark magic. With this much hints, a certain person came to their minds. Aiko and the students muttered, “That, can’t be…,” at the same time as they showed mixed and complexed expressions. Though it didn’t limited to pure black, they said as they didn’t wanted to believed it.

And, Hajime suddenly leaked a mutter, “Ooh, this is…,” as he looked at the distance. If ones asked, having heard Tio’s story, he seemed to have looked for the groups of demonic beasts and the black robed man using the unmanned probes.

Following that, the unmanned probes finally discovered a certain place where the demonic beasts army was. They numbered….

“That’s, not at the level of 3,000 to 4,000, you know? It’s at the level which one more digit should be added.”

Everyone opened their eyes wide after they heard Hajime’s report. Moreover, the army had started their march. The direction was surely towards Ul town. As they were, they’d came out of the mountain in a half day, and they’d likely reached the town in a day.

“W-We must quickly inform the town—! Tell them to take shelter, called the rescue from Imperial capital,… … then, then….”

Because it was a serious situation, Aiko desperately tried to

arranged her words in confusion. No matter if the enemies were tens of thousand demonic beasts, even with their cheat-like specs, the students carried a trauma. Aiko didn't have any combat experience, while Will, who inspired to be an adventurer, and Tio who exhausted her magic power wouldn't even became an obstacle for the enemies. That's why, just as Aiko had said, they must quickly inform the town of the emergency, then it'd be the best to run away until the rescue from the Imperial capital came.

And, among everyone who was shaken, Will suddenly muttered.

"Umm, if it's Hajime-dono something can be…."

With those words, everyone looked at Hajime. Their eyes were dyed in expectation of the possibility. Having stared at like that, Hajime shook her hand gloomily, and replied with a feeling of abandonment.

"Don't look at me with such eyes. My work is only to take Will back to Fhu-ren. As if I will take the object of protection into a war. That's why you should stop that and immediately return to the town to report."

The students and Will could feel the antipathy from Hajime's unmotivated attitude. Among them, Aiko asked a question with an expression as if she remembered something.

"Nagumo-kun, did you find the black robed man?"

“Nn? Well, although I am checking the groups since a while ago, I didn’t see any human’s shadow.”

Having heard Hajime’s words, Aiko looked down again. Following that, potsuri, she said she wanted to remained here to confirmed if the black robed man was Shimizu Yukitoshi who currently missing or not. It was because Aiko always thought of her student. She’d likely unable to do anything if the current situation was caused by her own student, after all.

However, they couldn’t leave Aiko at the place where several ten thousands of demonic beast were, so Sonobe and the students desperately tried to persuade Aiko. But, Aiko still hesitated. Among them, then how if Nagumo also goes… … they began to think like that. Already, Hajime thought the talk about returning and not returning as they stopped in this place as a hassle, so he turned a cold look towards Aiko.

“Remain here if you want. We are going to take Will along to the town.”

As he said that, he gripped Will’s collar and dragged him as he began to descended the mountain. Will, Aiko, and the students tried to object in a panic. Their reason, they couldn’t leave the army of demonic beasts as is, they wanted to confirmed who the black robed man was, and the army could be defeated by Hajime….

Hajime let out a sigh and looked back Aiko and the others with somewhat irritated look.

“Didn’t I already said it, my job is to protect Will. Taking along the protection target into battle against that army is something I won’t do.. For example, even if I have to do it, the obstacle would be too big and it’d be a battle of annihilation for me alone. By no means would I want to suffer like that. Furthermore, if you go to confirm the black robed man’s identity, then who will report this matter to the town? If by chance we are annihilated, the town will be devoured by a surprise attack, you know? By the way, the magic-driven two-wheeler can only be moved by me, so it’d be impossible for the others to return earlier if I fight, kay?”

Having heard the logical counter to their demands, Aiko and the others were speechless as he pointed how futile their demands were.

“Well, just as Mas—… … Kohonh, just as he said. Because this one has exhausted her magic power, this one can do nothing. So, the top priority is to inform the town about the emergency. If this one rests for one day, this one will recover considerably.”

Because everyone kept silent, Tio spoke to back him up. Just a little, she called Hajime in a strange way… … but it must have been their imagination. Aiko also knew that it’d be the best to temporary stopped worrying about Shimizu, and she decided to give priority to secure the safety of the students by her side.

Tio was unable to moved due to magic power exhaustion, so Hajime dragged her by her neck root. Actually, the male students said someone should carried Tio on their backs as they grandly scattered sparks among themselves, but that was rejected by the female students. And because Tio herself have wished it, she was somehow carried by Hajime.

However, rather than on his back, it was Hajime's characteristic to not hold her. As he frowned because it was a hassle, he suddenly gripped Tio's foot and began to dragged her.

Because of the protests from Aiko and the others, he reluctantly changed it to gripping her neck root, and dragged her just like before. No matter what Hajime did, it resulted in Tio, who somehow floated an ecstatic expression that made the surroundings shuddered, and they descended the mountain as is.

The party, with dark cloud and an army behind them, rushed to return to the Ul town.

Arifureta: Volume 6 Chapter 10

Chapter 60 of the Web Novel.

Sensei's Talk

The magic-driven four-wheeler dashed out at faster speed than when they'd departed, but the land-leveling function couldn't keep up, so Tio, who was crucified on the ceiling, received the impact. The male students in the carrier received a mixer-like shaking.

Then, at that time, he discovered the fully-armed bodyguard Knights who fiercely drove their horses in the area between the town of Ul and northern mountain range. Hajime's "Farsight" could see David in the lead wearing an oni-like expression while Chase who was beside him couldn't hide his frustration as they swiftly rode.

Having ran for a while, they discovered a black object that created a clamor as it moved. It was natural for them to think what they saw was a demonic beast. With their weapons drawn, they changed their formation. Their response speed was fast, and indeed, it was clear how they were praised as the VIP's bodyguards.

In particular, even if he was going to be attacked, Hajime didn't have any problem to just charge past them, but Aiko didn't know that because she thought it'd be a serious matter if Tio, who raised a bewitching and charming scream, and the pale male students were exposed to such attacks. She showed her face through the sunroof and desperately waved her hands as she shouted at David to notice her.

As they drew near, David tried to invoke his magic. He narrowed his eyes as he could see a human-like figure suddenly spring up above the black object that came in high speed. Normally, he'd do a preemptive strike as there was nothing to argue about, but something inside him told him to stop. It could be said that it was his sixth sense exclusive to Aiko, the so-called high-sensitivity Aiko sensor.

With his hand held out, he sent his subordinates the signal to stop their attacks. Although the subordinates were suspicious about it, they became wide-eyed as they heard the familiar voice from the human-like thing that grew out of the top of the black object as it approached them. David had already displayed an expression as if he couldn't believe it and muttered, "Aiko?"

For a moment, don't tell me Aiko's lower half was eaten by that demonic beast!?, as David and the others became pale, but Aiko waved her hands energetically and said, "David-sa~n, it's me! Please don't attack us~!", with a voice full of life.

They understood that they had misunderstood the situation, and they let out joyful expressions at this reunion because the one on the black object was undoubtedly the person they held dear. As if he was drunk on the situation, David greatly spread his arms with an expression that said "Come! Jump into my arms!" Chase and the others at his sides also spread their arms as if saying, "Jump to me —!"

Seeing the Knights' appearances with their hands spread, Hajime looked displeased. Although Aiko and the students thought Hajime would obviously stop before David and the Knights… Hajime

suddenly poured more magic power, and they accelerated.

Because they were at a distance where deceleration was absolutely necessary, the Knights became stupefied when the black object accelerated further, and moved away in panic.

Hajime's magic-driven four-wheeler just passed David and the Knights who spread their hands in smiles. Aiko could only shout, "Why?," that became smaller because of the Doppler effect, while David and the Knights just hardened and smiled as is. After that, in the next moment they screamed, "Aikoo~!," just like those separated from their lovers, and began to fiercely run after the four-wheeler.

"Nagumo-kun! Why, why did you do such a dangerous thing!?"

Aiko became angry, getting back into the vehicle and fiercely protested against Hajime.

"There's no reason to stop, Sensei. If we stop, they'd likely ask about the situation. Do we have such time? We'll explain the situation in town after all, so there's no need to do it twice, right?"

"Uh, th-that's true…"

She was somewhat convinced, the things about them slipping out without permission and Hajime's four-wheeler would certainly take too much time, so Aiko shut her mouth. Yue, who got back into her

seat, drew her face to Hajime's ear and asked him.

"… Real intention?"

"Those smiling Knights made me feel unpleasant."

"… Nn, same here."

By the way, right behind the Aiko poking her face out of the sunroof, was Tio tied up on the vehicle. An expression of ecstasy floated across her face because her damaged body continued to be stimulated by the vibration of vehicle's frame, but it seemed the Knights and Aiko didn't see her.

In addition, when they arrived at the town, Yue who knew of Tio's disgraceful behavior said "… is this, the Ryuujin race?," as she raised a slightly shocked expression. Since the first time Tio released her Dragon Form at the Northern Mountain range, she was in a subtle mental state and seemed to "feel" the pain, that's why Yue finally broke free from her illusion-like respect and yearning towards the Ryuujin race.

* * *

Arriving at the town of Ul, Hajime and his party calmly walked, while Aiko and the others were running towards the town headman's place. Hajime thought of parting with Aiko and the students here and quickly taking Will back to Fhu-ren, but he reluctantly followed them because Will had started running before Aiko and the students.

The town was full of liveliness. The dishes came in wide varieties and abundantly, and the town was near a lake. It was the location where people and nature gathered. No one would ever dream that this town would be trampled by an army of demonic beasts in a day. Hajime and his party were looking at such a town, remembering they didn't have any meals since yesterday, so they advanced towards the town hall as they enjoyed skewers from a stall.

Hajime and his party finally arrived at the town hall, and the place was already in a commotion. The branch head of Ul's town guild, town executives, and the priests from the church were gathered and in a state of uproar. All of their expressions showed they couldn't believe and didn't want to believe the information brought by Aiko, the students, and Will as they closely questioned them.

Normally, they'd just put it off as nonsense from a madman if they heard tomorrow the town would be annihilated, but they were words that came from Aiko the "God's Apostle," and also known as the "Goddess of Good Harvest." That was followed by the recent fact that the Demon race was capable of manipulating demonic beasts, so they couldn't just ignore this information.

By the way, from the discussion inside the vehicle, Aiko and the students had agreed to hide Tio's true form and there was a possibility of Shimizu Yukitoshi being the mastermind behind this. It's undesirable for the Ryuujin race's existence to be exposed, so Tio asked them to stay silent about this, and the mastermind's identity was just a possibility, so Aiko didn't want to carelessly convey it.

Aiko somehow or another agreed to conceal the information about the existence of the Ryuujin race because the race is something

half-taboo for the Church of Saints, and it'd only cause chaos followed by the formation of a subjugation unit.

Within such commotion, Hajime came towards Will. He only thought of the surrounding chaos as blowing wind.

"Oi, Will. Don't just run all of a sudden. Remember that you're under my protection. If you're done reporting, let's quickly go back to Fhuren."

With Hajime's words, Will, Aiko and the others were surprised as they looked at Hajime. The others, the town leaders seemed to feel displeased as they looked at Hajime interrupting the emergency discussion, as if saying "Who the hell is this?"

"Wh-What are you saying? Hajime-dono. It's a time of emergency now, right? Don't tell me, you're going to desert the town…"

Will started arguing with Hajime with an expression as if he couldn't believe what he'd just said, and Hajime replied with an expression as if he expected this hassle.

"Deserting or whatever it is, in the end, aren't you also going to abandon the town, take shelter, and wait for rescue to come? I'm already aware of this town's defenses from sightseeing… if you want to take shelter, it'd be okay to go to Fhu-ren. For a while now you've only talked about quickly evacuating the people."

“Th-That’s… right… but, I can’t just run away by myself in such a serious situation! Even I should have something I can help with. Even Hajime-dono…”

“Hajime-dono, please cooperate too,” was the continuation of Will’s words, but his words were interrupted as he was frozen by Hajime’s cold eyes.

“… Do I need to speak more clearly to make you understand? My job is to take you back to Fhuren. I don’t have anything to do with this town. Listen, I won’t hear your opinion. If you still don’t want to go… I’ll just crush your limbs and drag you back.”

“Wh—, th-that’s…”

From Hajime’s atmosphere, Will guessed those words were serious as he turned pale. His expression said he couldn’t believe it. Hajime, who could overwhelm the dragon that easily annihilated veteran adventurers like Gale’s party, looked a little like a hero to Will. That’s why even if he was merciless, Will unconditionally believed Hajime would somehow help the townspeople under such an emergency. That’s why Will felt betrayed by the cold words thrown out by Hajime..

As he was at a loss for words, Will unconsciously distanced himself from Hajime, but Hajime decided to approach him. Because of such a strange atmosphere, the surrounding people could only alternate looks between Hajime and Will without moving. Then someone suddenly moved and blocked Hajime.

It was Aiko. She immediately looked up straight at Hajime with a resolute expression.

“Nagumo-kun. If it’s you… can’t you do something about the army of demonic beasts? No… you can do it, right?”

Aiko’s voice carried conviction, he can do something if it’s Hajime. In other words, she declared he would be able to save the town. With those words, the surrounding town leaders started to make noise.

If they were to believe the reported threat from Aiko and the others, the enemies were tens of thousands of demonic beasts. Furthermore, they gathered from several mountain range areas. That meant it was on the scale of a war. Consequently, an individual wouldn’t be able to influence the war. That’s common sense. To overturn such common sense, there was a special existence even among the ones summoned from another world, that’s a Hero. But, it didn’t really mean he could win alone against an army. What it meant was leading the human race and together with his companions, simply using quantity. That’s why they couldn’t believe the boy in front of them who wasn’t even a Hero could do something, even if those words came from Aiko. Even if they were words from the “Goddess of Good Harvest”

Towards Aiko’s powerful gaze, Hajime waved his hands gloomily as he tried to deceive her by denying it.

“No no, Sensei. Isn’t that impossible? Aren’t there more than 40,000 of them? It’ll be very, very—…”

“But, at that time in the mountain, you didn’t say it was

“impossible” when Will-san asked if Nagumo-kun could do something about it. Also, didn’t you say “the obstacle would be too big and it’d become a fight till the last one standing for me alone”? To put it plainly, there’s a possibility it’d become a fight till the last one standing, right? Did I hear it wrong?”

“… What good memory”

Because of Aiko’s good memory, Hajime’s face distorted as he awkwardly said that. He didn’t regret what he’d said. Aiko requested with a more serious expression to Hajime who averted his face.

“Nagumo-kun. Can’t you somehow lend us your power? If this keeps up, not only will this beautiful town be destroyed, a lot of lives will surely be lost.”

“… How unexpected. I thought you held students as your top priority. Even all the things you’ve done were inevitably because there’s the possibility it’d be able to return you even a bit earlier, right? Nevertheless, for the sake of unfamiliar people, you are trying to send a student to his death? You don’t have the intention, but it’s as though you’re just like those guys from the church who tried to spur us to war, you know?”

Hajime’s words were full of ridicule, but Aiko was still the same. Her expression was not the worried expression from just a minute ago, it was a resolute and “teacher”-like expression. There were priests from the church who listened to Hajime and Aiko’s conversation nearby. They frowned and watched him with narrowed eyes because Hajime’s words were full of disdain towards the church. That’s why Aiko didn’t move from her spot as she

straightened her gaze and posture.

"… If there's a method to return to our original world, I'd quickly return the students, and my feelings haven't changed even now. But, if that's impossible… then, we are living in this world now, the words we exchanged and the people who smiled at us, at the very least I don't want to abandon the people within my reach. Thinking like this is natural as a human. Of course because sensei is a teacher, my priority will not change even under such an emergency…"

Aiko spun her words of confirmation one by one.

"Nagumo-kun, you're calm even now, that's why I think you've experienced something beyond our imagination, to become like this. That's why I feel that you have the composure to think about other people. The words of a teacher who couldn't be by your side when you were most hurt… might be too light for you. But, please hear me out, somehow."

Hajime kept quiet as is, and he returned Aiko's gaze, urging her to continue.

"Nagumo-kun. Last night, didn't you say you'll absolutely return to Japan? Then, Nagumo-kun. Are you going to return to Japan with everyone important to you except the ones who obstruct you? Are you going to leave everyone who becomes a hindrance to you? Will you be able to live like that in Japan? When you return to Japan, will you change your way of life? The reason sensei didn't want the students to actively fight is because I am concerned if they would be able to return to their old lives when they returned to Japan. Killing is… , I don't want you to become accustomed to that."

“…”

“Nagumo-kun, you have your own sense of values, your choice for the future is your own. In addition, you don’t have the obligation to hear the words from sensei’s mouth. But sensei thinks that no matter what kind of future you choose, the way of living which casts others away, other than those important to you… is a truly “lonely” one. Surely, that way of living will not make you and the ones important to you happy. If you wish for happiness, at least for those within your reach… please don’t forget how to sympathize with them. From the very beginning, that’s the important and priceless thing you once had… so don’t throw it away.”

One by one, Aiko spun words filled with her feelings, and she tried to convey all of them in front of Hajime. The leaders of the town and even the students heard Aiko’s words in silence. Especially the students. They looked down as if they were scolded as they felt bad they got carried away by their power. At the same time, because Aiko was serious about bringing them back even now, and even thought about how they’d live afterwards. With newfound feelings, they could be seen smiling happily as if something tickled them.

For Hajime, even if he crossed the worlds, no matter what the situation would be and even if the students had completely changed. Aiko who didn’t even deviate from a “teacher” made him smile wryly inside. It wasn’t out of contempt, but admiration. Aiko was treated special because of her rare value. She didn’t experience Hajime’s hardships, so he’d easily refute her with “Even though you don’t know anything!,” or “Don’t spout things as if you know them!” In a way it’s just like what Aiko had said, her words were “light.”

But, Hajime couldn't do that. Even now the "teacher" was looking straight at him, so to refute them as "light" words would be too unsightly. Moreover, Aiko hadn't even once pressured him about the "right" thing to do. All of her words were only for the sake of wishing for Hajime's future and happiness.

Hajime immediately turned his gaze towards Yue at Aiko's side. Yue somehow looked at Aiko as if feeling nostalgic. However, when she noticed Hajime's gaze, she immediately matched him straight with a serene gaze. Her eyes said that she'd adhere to whatever answer Hajime gave.

Inside the Abyss, she was his precious person who held his humanity right before he "fell," that's why Hajime certainly wished for her happiness. He thought it'd be okay if he did it by himself, but if he were to believe Aiko's words, Hajime's way of life wouldn't be able to make Yue happy.

When he changed his gaze further, he found the rabbit-eared girl who looked at him worriedly. Towards his world which narrowed to only Yue and him, she was the girl who brought liveliness. No matter how many times Hajime treated her unkindly, she desperately chased after him curiously, and now she was just like Yue, someone he loved as a friend and companion. For Hajime to accept Shia, didn't it bring happiness to Yue?

For Hajime, this world was like a prison. A cage that obstructed him from returning to his hometown. Therefore, it was extremely difficult for him to accept the people and everything in this world. Inside the Abyss, he discarded everything for the sake of returning, it wouldn't be an easy thing to change the sense of values carved in his mind which wouldn't forgive those who obstructed him. But even if it was difficult to "sympathize with other people," he could

do it. As a result, his precious things… if that'd bring happiness to Yue and Shia, he wouldn't be that stingy to pitch in and help.

Hajime didn't agree to all of Aiko's words. Even so, it was a serious "scolding" from "his teacher." To disregard it as nonsense would be too childish. WIth this time's rampage, the possibility of the trouble of Hajime's existence being published would suddenly become bigger, but it'd be okay to work hard as just "Aiko-sensei"'s student. Whatever he chose, he already knew he'd be marked sooner or later. He had prepared to strike all of the troublesome things, he decided not to respect this world. That's why it wouldn't be bad to flashily show off his power.

With that, he thought a while for an excuse, then Hajime looked at Aiko again.

"… Sensei, no matter what happens after this, are you still my teacher?"

What Hajime implied was if she'd be his ally.

"Of course."

Towards that, Aiko replied without hesitating.

"… Whatever my decision? That's, even if the result isn't what sensei hoped?"

“That doesn’t have to be said. Sensei’s role isn’t to decide the students’ future. I’ll just help to make a better decision. Nagumo-kun has heard sensei’s talk, so I won’t refute your decision”

Hajime watched Aiko for a while to confirm whether there was a lie in her words. For him to intentionally have such commitment was because Hajime himself didn’t want to become hostile towards Aiko. After he confirmed there’s neither lie nor deception in Aiko’s eyes, Hajime turned towards the entrance. Yue and Shia immediately followed after him.

“Na-Nagumo-kun?”

Seeing such a Hajime, Aiko panickedly called him. Hajime looked back, he shrugged his shoulders and replied, having been beaten by Aiko’s “teacher style.”

“As expected, to take on a huge crowd of tens of thousands as opponents, I’ll need some time to prepare. Continue your discussion without me.”

“Nagumo-kun!”

Aiko’s face shone because of Hajime’s reply. Hajime could only smile wryly at such an Aiko.

“It is advice from the best “teacher” I’ve ever known. Moreover, if it’s connected to these girls’ happiness… I only need to consider it

a bit. Anyway, I'll just kick those guys around for now."

As he said that, he patted Yue and Shia's shoulder, then once again he turned his heels and went out of the room. Yue and Shia raised a truly joyful atmosphere, and began to run after Hajime in small steps.

Patan, the sound of the door being closed, the leaders of the town who shut their mouth after being drowned by the atmosphere between Aiko and Hajime, and immediately asked about the situation from Aiko.

Aiko, whose shoulders were shaken, stared at the door which Hajime went out of. Her face didn't transmit any joy towards Hajime. What she said to Hajime were Aiko's true feelings, that his way of life was a sad one.

But, in the end, there's no denying that she made an important student confront an army of demonic beasts. While she said she didn't want them to grow accustomed to using their power, she was conscious of the contradiction she'd made by sending him off to fight. She thought she wanted Hajime to rethink his way of life, but she also thought of wanting to help the townspeople of Ul. As a result, both of them seemed to be fulfilled… but she wanted to search for better ways. Aiko secretly let her shoulders droop because of her helplessness as a teacher.

She prayed, for all of her students to not lose their hearts, and to return to their homes… but, Aiko's wish couldn't be fulfilled. After hearing Hajime's story last night, Aiko herself felt that her wishes were already just an illusion. However, she couldn't stop wishing for it.

Surrounded by the leaders who raised a ruckus and the students who looked at her in respect and affection, Aiko didn't realize she let out a sigh.

By the way, Tio who had come to the town hall with Hajime and his party muttered, "Although this one is an important witness… i-is this neglect play… as expected of Mas—", with a flushed expression, and she was naturally ignored.

Arifureta: Volume 7 Chapter 1

Chapter 61 of the Web Novel.

Goddess Advent?

Ul town. The mountain range area in the North and Uldeia lake in the West brought abundant resources to the town. Currently, the town was encircled by an “outer wall” that didn’t exist last night as the town was wrapped in a strange atmosphere.

This “outer wall” was something Hajime instantly built. Using the magic-driven two-wheeler, he ran around the town’s outer circumference and transmuted the “outer wall” without leveling the land. First of all, the wall’s height was only four meters tall because it was the range limit of Hajime’s transmutation, it was not a really tall one. If it was a big-sized demonic beast, it would easily be able to climb over the wall. Tentatively, there’s no problem because it made the people feel better in such an emergency. To begin with, Hajime wouldn’t depend on such a wall.

The thing about the approaching army of tens of thousands of demonic beasts was already known to the townspeople. Considering the demonic beasts’ movement speed, the vanguard would arrive right before evening. Naturally, the townspeople panicked. People began to insult the town leaders including the mayor; others cried and collapsed on where they were, people closely embraced the person next to them, some scrambled to escape even among companions, and there were those who started to blame each other. Tomorrow, this town would be destroyed and they knew they’d lose their lives if they stayed here, so they didn’t have the luxury to remain calm. The way they were acting couldn’t be helped.

But there was someone who made them regain their composure. It was Aiko. Finally arriving at the town, the guard Knights received the briefing and they shouted “Goddess of Good Harvest.” With her dignified appearance showing she didn’t fear anything, coupled with her originally high popularity made the people regain their composure for now. Hatayama Aiko, in a certain way, was more hero-like than a hero.

The people who regained their composure divided into two groups. Those who wouldn’t throw away their hometown and would share the same fate as this town; the stay-behind group. The other one was as planned in the beginning, escaping to safety until rescue came; the shelter group. Even among the stay-behind group, a lot of women and children were put into the shelter. They believed Aiko’s words that the demonic beasts would be repulsed, and they wondered if they could help somehow and the stay-behind men decided to help while the wives and children would stay inside the shelter in case of an emergency. Although it passed midnight, the appearance of people embracing each others for separation in tears could be seen everywhere.

The shelter group went out of the town while carrying their luggages before dawn. The sun had raised high now, the people were divided between those who prepared for the battle and those who took a nap. Most of the stay-behind group believed in the “Goddess of Good Harvest”‘s party, even so, we will protect our town ourselves!, we’ll do what we can!, they were filled with such strong spirits.

Even if the people had decreased, there was more liveliness than usual so Hajime sat on the instant rampart behind the town, it was unknown where he was looking as he looked at the distance. Naturally, by his sides were Yue and Shia. They sat beside Hajime,

they thought of something, then the two quietly drew closer to him.

Them, Aiko, the students, Tio, Will, David, and several guard Knights arrived there. Even though he noticed Aiko and the others approaching, he didn't turn around and made David and the Knights frown, but Aiko called on him earlier than them.

"Nagumo-kun, how are your preparations? Did you need something else?"

"No, there's no problem, sensei."

Of course Hajime simply answered so without turning around. Unable to endure his attitude, David snapped on him.

"Oi, you. What's with your attitude towards Aiko… towards your honored teacher. Normally, I wouldn't overlook the details about the artifact you carry and the details about your method of repulsing the army of demonic beasts, but I didn't do that because Aiko had asked me earnestly, you know? At least…"

"David-san. Can you keep quiet for now?"

"Uh… affirmative…"

However, when Aiko told him to "shut up" he dejectedly shut his mouth. His appearance was just like a dog. Even though he wasn't

a demi-human, one could see dog-ears and a tail. Now, those things seemed to hang down dejectedly because the owner was angry.

“Nagumo-kun. About the black-robed man…”

Apparently, that’s the subject. Anguish oozed out from Aiko’s words.

“Are you going to confirm his identity? Even if I find him, you’re telling me to not kill him, right?”

“… Yes. It’s necessary to confirm his identity. That’s… if it’s an unreasonable thing for Nagumo-kun…”

“For the time being, I’ll just bring him here.”

“Eh?”

“I’ll bring the black robe to sensei. Sensei is thinking as a teacher… so I’ll do just that.”

“Nagumo-kun… thank you very much.”

Aiko was a little surprised because of the unexpected cooperation from Hajime. Hajime didn’t even turn around even now, and

thinking Hajime had a lot to think about, she decided to receive his goodwill. She muttered I am powerless as she sighed secretly, then Aiko said her gratitude with a bitter smile.

It looked like Aiko's talk was over, and this time Tio moved forward and called Hajime.

"Fumu, I wonder if it's okay. This one mas-… gohonh! matter to talk… is a request, will you hear it?"

"? … Tio huh"

"Th-Thou, don't tell me that this one's existence was forgotten… haa haa, there's also something like this…"

Because it was an unfamiliar voice, Hajime inadvertently looked over his shoulder, and there was black clothes with golden embroidery which resembled a kimono and splendidly slipped down, white and smooth shoulders together with an enchanting valley, followed by the beautiful leg which peeped from the cut from the knee; a black-haired, golden-eyed beautiful woman. For a moment, his eyes seemed dubious and he remembered with "Aa, now that you mention" then called her name. Obviously, Tio whose existence was forgotten was far from getting angry, she was blushing and her breathing became rough. Her "something like this" was unknown, but it'd be better to not asked her about it.

"Nnh, nnh! That's, after this battle end and thou sent Will back, art thou going to continue to travel?"

“Aa, that’s so.”

“Fumu, this one’s request is that… this one want to accompany thou…”

“I refuse.”

“… Haa haa. I-Immediate answer just as expected. As expected of mas-…kohonh! Of course it’s not for free! I’ll call thou “Master” from now own, and dedicated all of this one to thee! Body and mind, all of them! How is it?”

“Just return, rather just return into the ground.”

While spreading her arms, Tio declared to become Hajime slave with an expression of ecstasy, and Hajime, who looked at her as if looking at a filth, immediately casted her away. Tio’s body shook again. Her cheek became rose-colored. No matter who saw her, they’d thought of her as a pervert. Even the surrounding people were taken aback. Especially Yue who had strong yearning and respect towards Ryuujin tribe, her noh mask-like expression crumbled with all of her feelings.

“That’s… cruel… Master was the one who turned this one’s body into this… this one want thou to take the responsibility!”

Everyone became “Eh!?” as they looked at Hajime. As expected, he couldn’t just leave that ridiculous and false accusation alone, Hajime immediately looked at Tio’s direction and he glared at her with veins popped. His glare asked what she meant by that.

“Au, to be seen as filth by those eyes again… haa haa… gulp… that’s, look, isn’t this one strong?”

Her body shuddered again because of Hajime’s glare, then Tio began to explain her thought process that reached extraordinary conception to declared herself as Hajime’s slave.

“Even in my hometown, this one only have one, two fights, and this one’s particular endurance surpassed them. That’s why, to be held down by other and even to felt pain-like pain never happened until now and only until now.”

Because the guard Knights nearby didn’t know Tio came from Ryuujin tribe, Tio’s words trickle down with some omission.

“That’s why, when this one fought Master, it’s the first time this one was knocked down, being held down, and tasted the pain and defeat for the first time. That’s right, that fist which resonated with this body’s core! The impacts that always aimed at unpleasant points! The pain that could felt throughout this one’s body… haa haa”

Although Tio said that herself, the Knights who didn’t know she was from Ryuujin race turned their gaze towards Hajime as if they looked at a criminal. If ones heard it objectively, it was a

completely like a woman assaulting case. “How could you assaulted such beautiful woman!,” was the noise raised by the Knights. They didn’t plainly blamed him because they felt pity on the victim; Tio. Rather, the Knights with strong sense of justice were perplexed because she look so happy.

“… In other words, Hajime opened a new door for you?”

“That’s it! This one’s body is already useless without Master!”

“… Gross”

Yue’s expression was distorted as if she saw something unpleasant, her tone no longer carried respect when Tio said her agreement. Spontantly, Hajime revealed his feeling. He was completely taken aback.

“Furthermore…”

Tio’s perverted look suddenly changed as she began fidgeting while she held her hip with her hands in embarrassment.

“… This one’s first time was stolen already.”

With those words, everyone’s faces showed their surprise as they looked at Hajime. Hajime said “There’s no such thing,” as he shook his neck while his cheeks were convulsing.

“This one had decided to only admit stronger man than this one as companion… but, there’s no such person in this one’s hometown… To be defeated, and to be held down like that… was the first time… to suddenly used this one’s ass… Moreover, such intensity… that’s why thou art this one’s Master. This one want thou to take responsibility.”

Tio’s eyes were moistened as she looked at Hajime while holding her butt. The Knights’ eyes said, “This guy just a criminal after all!,” and continued with “To suddenly attacked the ass-,” as they talked and floated shuddering expressions. Even Aiko and the others who knew the truth glared at Hajime with blaming eyes. Even Yue and Shia’s expressions by his side said, “That’s a little-,” as they averted their gazes. Even before the approaching of the army, Hajime was dragged into a situation where he was surrounded by enemies on all sides.

“Y-You, didn’t you have things to do? That’s why you went out from your hometown.”

Because Yue and the others averted their gazes, Hajime replied desperately about “Ryuujin race’s investigation.”

“Umu. There’s no problem. It absolutely will become more efficient if this one is beside Master. It’s just like hitting two birds with one stone… look, aren’t there various things happened in travel? It’s okay to let out the frustration on this one, okay? It’s also okay to do it stronger. Isn’t that a good thing for Master?”

“There’s only demerit with a pervert by my side.”

Tio clung to him, but Hajime just cast her away. It followed by the guard Knights' resentment, female students who saw Hajime as a maggot, male students who felt a complex about women from different world as they looked at Hajime with envy, Aiko who started to preach about illicit sexual relationship, and Will who somehow looked at Hajime with eyes of respect. Inside such chaotic situation, the army kept approaching them, and when Hajime started to became tired of it, they finally came.

" ! … They've arrive huh."

Hajime suddenly turned his gaze towards the mountain range area in the north. He displayed his narrowed eyes as he looked at the distance. Even though they weren't in location that could be seen by naked eyes, Hajime could clearly saw it from the image from Unmanned Reconnaissance Planes which displayed on his "Magic Eye Crystal."

There was a crowd of demonic beasts who completely wrapped the ground. Beside human-type demonic beasts like Brutal, there were three-four meter big and black wolf-like demonic beasts, and there were also lizard-like demonic beasts with six legs, phyton-like demonic beasts with needles protruded from their backs, mantis-like demonic beasts with four scythes, huge spider-like demonic beasts with numerous tentacles grown all over their bodies, and there were pure white, two headed snakes. It truly a rich variation of demonic beasts and their march made the ground trembled as cloud of dust was scattered by their tremendous force. Their number seemed to have increased further since the time he confirmed it at the mountain. It was a large army of around 50,000-60,000.

In addition, there were also flying-type demonic beasts above the large crowd. They could be compared to the Pteranodon. One of the tens of pteranodon-fakers was especially big, and a person shadow could slightly be seen on it. It was probably the black robed man. Although Aiko's manner showed she didn't want to believe it, it was Shimizu Yukitoshi 8 or 9 out of ten cases.

"… Hajime."

"Hajime-san."

Yue and Shia noticed something approached them from the change in Hajime's atmosphere. They called out to Hajime. Hajime turned his gaze towards the two and he nodded once, following that he turned his glance towards Aiko and the others whose faces filled with tension behind him.

"They've come. Although it's considerably earlier than the schedule, it'll be 30 minutes until their arrival. The number are more than 50,000. They are mix of more than two kind of demonic beasts."

Hearing the number of demonic beasts had increased further, Aiko and the others turned paler. Towards Aiko and the others who looked uneasy, Hajime jumped above the wall and he displayed a fearless smile over his shoulder.

"Don't make that face, sensei. There'll be no problem because there's only addition of several tens of thousand. Just as planned, those who can fight should stand by the "wall side" in case of emergency. Well, there'll be no turn for them though."

Without any fighting mood, Hajime told them to leave it to him, and Aiko narrowed her eyes as they slightly sparkling.

“I understand… though I don’t know what I can do just by standing here just as you’ve said… somehow please be safe…”

As Aiko said that, the guard Knights said, “I wonder if it’s okay to leave it to Hajime” and “Even though it’s too late, we should go to the shelter,” as they ran while carrying the information towards the town. Even the students looked at Hajime with complexed eyes once, then ran after Aiko. Beside Hajime and his party, the remaining were only Will and Tio.

Will was talking about something to Tio, then he ran after Aiko and the others after he bowed to Hajime. Tio answered Hajime’s questioning face with a wry smile.

“Because this one will use all of this one’s power to overcome this incident, then at the very least this ones wanted Will-boy to forgive this one about the adventurers, that kind of talk… that’s why this one will help thee. What, even if this one’s magic power isn’t recovered enough for Dragon Form, this one’s flame and wind are quite the real deal, kay?”

Ryuujin race was called odd existence by the church, and although they could be considered as demi-human race, they could directly manipulated magic power just like demonic beasts. Therefore, even though she wasn’t an all attribute, chantless, no magic circle genius like Yue, there were attributes she excelled at, and she seemed to be capable to do it chantless just like Yue.

Tio self-claimed that as she vehemently stuck out her chest to deliberately emphasized it, but Hajime just silently throw a ring made of magic-crystallization stone. Although Tio showed a questioning look, she opened her eyes wide when she understood it was a magic power tank made of God Crystal, then she looked at Hajime with moistened eyes and speak with a shaking voice.

“Master… to propose right before a fight… this one, of course, this one’s answer is…”

“As if. I am only lending it to you because you have the duty as the battery, no more, no less. Rather, did you just tried to be the fool like a certain someone just now?”

“… I see, that black history.”

Yue dropped her shoulders with unpleasant expression because her thought pattern was somewhat similar to this pervert. Hajime’s objection was completely ignored as Tio put the ring on her finger and gazed at it with a grin while she was also being ignored by him, and finally the large group of demonic beasts could be seen by naked eyes. People with bows and magic arrays in their hands gathered on the “outer wall.” The ground began to tremor, and demonic beasts’ roars could be heard together with dust storm in the distance. Some people started to pray to the god and some people wore expressions as if they’d be dead at any time.

Having seen that, Hajime came forward. Using transmutation, he created the speech stand by piling up the ground. He didn’t thought of easing people’s anxiety because it’d simply turned into

panic if friendly fire happened.

Something suddenly climbed on the foundation outside the wall, and the people who thought it was one of the approaching demonic beasts were glaring at it, but they were bewildered because where their gazes gathered was a white-haired, eye-patched boy.

After he confirmed everyone's gazes were turned to him, Hajime inhaled then speak with a voice that could reached the heaven.

"Listen! O brave people of Ul town! Our victory is nothing but confirmed!"

Wondering what was suddenly said, the townspeople looked at each other. Hajime looked at their confusion with narrowed eyes and continued his words.

"If you ask for the reason, it is because the Goddess has taken side with us! That's right, it's the "Goddess of Good Harvest" everyone know; Aiko-sama!"

Hearing those words, everyone began to raised noises with, Aiko-sama? Goddess of Good Harvest?. Aiko whose accompanied by the guard Knights behind and had been helped guiding the people became stupefied.

"As long as Aiko-sama is beside us, we are unbeatable! Aiko-sama is the living god send by the heaven as an ally to humanity, and

brought to us “Good Harvest” and “Victory”! I am Aiko-sama’s sword and also her shield, I am here to answer her desire to protect everyone! Look! This is my power which guided by Aiko-sama!”

As he said that, Hajime pull out Schlagen from the void and anchors from its barrel pierced the ground to fixed its position. Following that, he crouched and the townspeople observed him as he aligned his sight towards the vanguard of demonic beasts, the pteranodon-fakers… and he pulled the trigger.

A bright red spark released from Schlagen and accompanied with killing intent, a blinding light ran through the sky in an instant. It crushed one of the pteranodon-fakes which was several kilometers away, and several others on the surrounding descended into the ground because their wings were pulverized by the after-effect. As is, Hajime continued to fired for the second and third times, and the demonic beasts in the sky were exterminated. Then, he purposely altered his aim and the rather huge pteranodon-fake started to fall as it was confused by what happened, moreover the black robed man who rode on it was blown by the after-effect. The black robe blown into the air and he tried to resist the fall.

He didn’t have the time to bring the black robe to Aiko until all of the demonic beasts were dealt with, so he choose to defeat the fastest ones to escape for now. Although Aiko would be angry if she heard he shot him down, he didn’t care at the least if that person was hurt after all. At least Aiko might not noticed it because he shot it down while they were still far away.

Hajime finished exterminating the demonic beasts in the sky and he calmly turned around. There were the appearances of the townspeople who became dumbfounded and slack-jawed.

“All hail Aiko-sama!”

Hajime raised words of praise for Aiko as his last duty. Then, in the next moment…

“”””””””All hail Aiko-sama! Long live Aiko-sama! Cheers for Aiko-sama! All hail Aiko-sama!”””””””””

“”””””””All hail Goddess! Long live Goddess! Cheers for Goddess! All hail Goddess!”””””””””

Inside Ul town, it was no longer just her nickname, a true goddess was bornt. Apparently, their anxiety had blown away as everyone in the town raise shouts of praise as their shining eyes looked towards Aiko, the goddess; their hope. In the distance, Aiko’s face turned crimson as she trembled. Her eyes immediately turned towards Hajime and her small mouth moved as it said, “What.Do.You.Mean.By.This!”.

Hajime turned towards the large crowd of demonic beasts again. Hajime pushed such façade to Aiko because he had his own reason. First, Hajime’s activity would surely make the Church and the Kingdom move in the future, and because Aiko would confronted them if they tried to harm Hajime, it’d be better for her words as “Goddess of Good Harvest” carried power at that time. If they could overcome the town’s emergency with Aiko-sama(…)’s power, then the townspeople would started their own rumour and the name “Goddess of Good Harvest” would surely grabbed people’s hearts further. At that time, she wasn’t only a useful talent for the kingdom but also the goddess that people supported, so the Church and the Kingdom couldn’t easily put their hands on her as her words carried more power.

The second reason was simply because the townspeople would only become frightened and hostile if they were shown a big power. That's why even if they showed their power, the townspeople's wonder and fear would be relieved when they remembered it came from the goddess who supported them, and the hostility could be changed to goodwill. Even if they were chased by the Church, there'd be people who cooperated with them… and that's a good thing.

The third reason was simply to declare that he'd took the full brunt of everything aimed towards "Nagumo Hajime's teacher."

His number one reason was so that the townspeople would not panicked and did something wrong, and he immediately thought to do that. Afterwards Aiko would told him various things, but there were also merits for Aiko and she should overlook it because it was the result of her decision… it'd be okay to just escape once everything's over.

With townspeople's shouts that they wouldn't be defeated by demonic beasts because of Aiko on his back, along with Aiko's piercing glance, and the guard Knights floated smiles as they muttered "Just what, that guys understood well what we meant" and looked at him, Hajime took out two Metherai's ammunition belt from "Treasure Box" and put them on his shoulders as he advanced ahead.

On her right was Yue as always, on his left was Shia with Orkan on her shoulder which Hajime loaned to her, and beside him was also Tio who absent-mindedly staring at the ring of magic crystallization stone. On the horizon, the pteranodon-fakers who

fell to the ground as if they weren't related to all of this and demonic beasts who marched single-mindedly filled their view.

Hajime looked at Yue. Yue returned Hajime's gaze and silently nodded. Hajime looked at Shia. Shia with her rabbit ears stood straight nodded full of confidence. Tio on his side… he just put her aside.

Hajime returned his gaze towards the large crowd and floated a smile, and he mutter without any eagerness.

"Then, let's do it."

Arifureta: Volume 7 Chapter 2

Chapter 62 of the Web Novel.

Ul Town's Trampling Drama

(What's with this… what the heck THIS IS!!)

The large crowd of tens of thousand demonic beasts came to attack Ul town from the rear side. The instantly built moat, and the boy, Shimizu Yukitoshi, who desperately shrunk his trembling body as he hysterically invoked barrier, could only flapped his mouth as he couldn't believed the disastrous scene in front of him. An unbelievable spectacle, and the reality he didn't want to believe, he repeatedly cursed with words that wouldn't come out.

That's right, the one behind the large crowd of demonic beasts was unmistakably Aiko's missing student, Shimizu Yukitoshi. By the contract he exchanged with a certain man, he planned to frame Aiko and the others for Ul's annihilation. However, the townspeople whom he thought would be easily twisted and crushed were still unharmed by the completely unforeseen and threatening ambush. Rather, the current progress brought forth was just like a painting of hell for Shimizu's side.

DOuRURURURURURURURURU!!!

DOuRURURURURURURURURU!!!

As such peculiar sounds resounded in the battlefield, numerous flashes filled with enough killing intent speeded along the sky. The flashes reached their target without giving any time to wink. No matter how strong the several species of demonic beasts who roared and made the earth rumbled were, they were changed into lump of meat in a moment without any chance to resist. The 12,000 death per minute became a merciless “wall” as they approached and they pierced their targets without such lukewarm words of “one bullet one body” as they went through several tens of more demonic beasts in the back.

The pierced demonic beasts, ignoring the law of inertia, were burst and collapsed on the spots in general. The demonic beasts immediately spreaded out to left and right to escape the trail of deaths. But the shooter, Hajime, naturally wouldn’t let them escape as he fired the second round from Metherai just like a folding fan. The “barrage” released and it approached all of the demonic beasts just like a rampart. In the blink of time, the mountain of corpses and river of blood were built.

In addition, on Hajime’s left side was Shia with Orkan on her shoulders and shouted, “Fly however you want~,” as she pulled the trigger. Pashu rang out in succession as the rocket launcher fired.

On the contrary of those stupid sounds, the warheads passed into the middle of demonic beasts as they leave trails of sparks and caused huge explosions which blown the demonic beasts within ten meters. The demonic beasts’ bodies near the ground zero were turned into pieces while the intense shock waves damaged the bones and internal organs of the ones farther. Furthermore, the demonic beasts that were incapable of even standing up were treaded and crushed to death.

Even though she exhausted all of the ammo, Shia reloaded it with the piles of warheads on her side from Hajime and fired them successively. The fired rockets exploded overhead the demonic beast just like grenades, and numerous brightly burning flames were scattered below. Just like incendiary grenade, the liquid tars which kept burning at 3,000 oC were extracted from Flame Crystal and poured down just like a great rain towards the demonic beasts whose bodies were burnt to ashes. They screamed and struggled as the flame which carried scorching destruction spreaded and swallowed the surroundings demonic beasts. Comparing the number of demonic beasts that exploded and the ones turned to ashes, in the area Shia was in charge of… were two against one.

Tio was positioned at Shia's right side. Her outstretched hands were releasing black aurora which scorched the surrounding air since a while ago. It was the Breath from her dragon form. Apparently, she was capable of shooting it even in human form. The black flame which was capable to press on Hajime's full power, defense flew and instantly penetrated the large crowds in the rear into annihilation. As is, Tio moved her arms horizontally and the black bombardment moved according to her arms and annihilated everything.

After the bombardment was stopped, nothing remained except the gouged ground. In exchange, it should be considerably exhausting. Tio's shoulders were dropped as her body trembled. However, she immediately straightened her posture after she kissed the ring in her finger. She was taking out magic power's stock inside the ring of magic crystallization she stone received from Hajime. Because of Breath attack, the vanguard demonic beasts around the area she was in charge of were annihilated, and Tio who could take it easy used magic with comparatively smaller consumption rate.

"Wind which blowing wildly, the torrent which burn in crimson, "Worldly Flame Tempest"."

For the sake of suppressing magic power consumption rate, she chanted and heightened her concentration. Following that, flame tornado magic was released. Its scale was the same as F4 class tornado on earth. The swirling flame of ten meters in diameter advanced towards the group of demonic beasts and the surrounding demonic beasts were blown up. The demonic beasts thrown up into the air didn't have any way to struggle and they jumped into the flame as is. Following that, what was thrown out from the crimson tornado were ashes scattered like gray snow. The tornado which turned everything into ashes was trampling the battlefield without reserve.

Yue's annihilation power on Hajime's right side surpassed them. Even though Hajime and the others started the attack, Yue stood still and had her eyes closed. The demonic beasts, who realized the attack from the right side was thinner, gathered there to escape the storm of destruction and invaded from the right-wing. The marching demonic beasts were crowding and came charging. At the moment, their distance was about 500 meters. Yue opened her eyes and slowly raised her right hand, and with two whispered words, she recited the name of the powerful magic as if declaring it to the world.

“”Threat Destroyer””

It was the trigger to invoke the Age of God's magic. It was the magic granted by Miledi Raisen which interfere with one law of the world, “gravity movement.” For the vampire princess who held the natural talent for magic, she needed a “long time” to control her magic power and to fix the image because it was a difficult magic she couldn't invoke immediately, yet.

Along with Yue's chant, the same swirling, dark orb just like the one when they fought the black dragon appeared above the approaching demonic beasts. However, there were differences as the orb shape was changed. The orb became thinner and thinner until its length reached 500 meters squarely above the demonic beasts. Following that, the dark ceiling which blocked the sunlight immediately fell before the demonic beasts.

In the next moment, it could be said "the demonic beasts were annihilated from the world." In truth, the Ul's townspeople behind the wall could only dumbfoundedly watch what Hajime and his party did as a trampling play; there's no other way to look at it.

The truth they seen made it looked like a simple thing. The dark ceiling fell into the the group of demonic beast, the demonic beast sunk into the ground as is, and a 10 meter crater with length of 500 meters was created. The demonic beasts that crowding and charging didn't have the time to understand what happened as all of their bodies were crushed and became stains at the bottom of the ground. In an aspect, it became just like the dump for demonic beasts' corpses. With only an attack from Yue, nearly 2,000 demonic beasts were killed in an instant, they were unfortunate as the demonic beasts' bodies were turned into pieces with their entrails scattered with this above the borderline technique.

The following demonic beasts fell one by one into the huge hole where the ground suddenly disappeared. Unable to null their charging momentum, they were pushed from the back. In the blink of time, several thousands of demonic beasts fell into the huge hole, then Yue once again interfere with gravity using magic power which taken out from magic crystallization stone. Demonic beasts' corpses were piled on top of demonic beasts' corpses.

The blowing wind carried the smell of the trampled demonic beasts' blood towards the town. Such strong smell made the townspeople one by one unable to suppressed their nausea, even so the townspeople raised an uproar because of the unreal "overwhelming power" and "trampling play." WAaAAA——, shout of joy raised all over the town.

The town leaders and the guard Knights remained dumbfounded as they saw Hajime and his party's power for the first time. The students who once again witnessed that power could strongly feel the "differences" between them as they showed expressions with mixed feelings. Originally, they were going protect the people from such demonic beasts, at leasts they first objected to defending from the same location as the townspeople where they could only see the back of a classmate that was looked down as an "incompetent." That's why their mind became complexed.

Aiko was only praying single-mindedly. For the safety of Hajime and his party. At the same time, her expression was distorted because the things about her had became too late to repair. With such gruesome battlefield in front of her, the contradiction with her sweetness strike on people's hearts.

Before long, the number of demonic beasts were remarkably decreased and the northern ground which was hidden by the large crowd could be seen, and Tio finally fell. Having exhausted the magic power from magic crystallization stone, she couldn't move because of magic power exhaustion.

"Muu, this one will stop here… already, no fireball can be made… sorry."

While she collapsed in prostration, only her face looked at Hajime which filled with apologizes and Tio's complexion had passed from blue as it turned white. Literally, the consumption of magic power she did could brought about her death.

"… It's enough. Looks like you aren't just a pervert. Leave the rest to me and sleep as is."

"… For Master to be gentle… though I thought I'd be insulted… No, about the whipping after this over… can I expect it?"

"Just die as is."

With her face looked like the dead whose blood was extracted, Tio's body began to trembling by Hajime's words. Her expression was one of a satisfaction. Hajime looked at her as if he saw something disgusting and clicked his tongue, then he returned his gaze towards the group of demonic beasts.

Now, their number with scale of 10,000 had been reduced by 8,000 to 9,000. If remembering the large crowd in the beginning, the damages could be stated as a total annihilation. However, the demonic beasts were still made reckless charges. To be accurate, it seemed some of the demonic beasts were giving them commands. The ordinary demonic beasts completely obeyed them, following the commands from the leader of various species, and they charging in perplexion. Hajime was able to noticed that because their number had fallen.

Assuming Shimizu Yukitoshi as the culprit behind this incident,

even if he carried some cheats, in truth, Hajime felt suspicious about it as he thought if he really could brainwashed such large crowd just like Tio. But, not all of the tens of thousands demonic beasts were brainwashed, by brainwashing the leaders of various species, he made the subordinates followed those leaders. It was quite efficient. However, there was still the doubt on how he gathered such number in a short time…

For now, he'd put that doubt aside. Because the leaders movements were monotonous and slow, even though there were some flexibilities along with the composition of demonic beasts who obeyed the repeated reckless commands, it'd be better for him to quickly kill those leaders. If he did that, the demonic beasts that faithful to their instinct would run away into the northern mountain because the difference of force from Hajime and his party was already carved into their body.

Hajime stared at the extermination weapon, Metherai, in his hands. Two smokes were raised and it seemed the cooling wouldn't make it in time. If he continued to attack more than this, it'd fell apart somewhere. Of course there was the possibility to restore it, but he couldn't do it instantly because it was a delicate objects. It was necessary to took some time to work precisely on it. That's why, because it'd be a hassle, he switched to more appropriate method of attack.

"Yue, your remaining magic power?"

"… Nn, only two of magic crystallization stones left… the consumption rate of that gravity magic was more than expected. Training is needed."

“No no, didn’t you just kill more than 20.000 alone? That’s enough. I’ll just pinpoint attack the leftover. Please cover me.”

“Nnh.”

Even though Hajime’s words were few, Yue immediately nodded in acknowledgement and carried it out. They were in harmony. Satisfied by that, Hajime talked to Shia.

“Shia, did you understand the difference in the demonic beasts?”

“Yes, The manipulated demonic beasts just like Tio at that time and the weak-kneed demonic beasts, right?”

“Weak-kneed… yup, well, that’s right. Probably, those demonic beasts that look like Tio’s are the leaders of the groups. The others will run away if they are killed.”

“I see, because I don’t have any ammo left, it’s direct killing!”

“… Ah, aa. What can I say, you’ve become sturdier…”

“Of course. It is for the sake of being by the side of you two.”

Towards the smiling Shia, Hajime returned a wry smile which

somehow feel like a gentle smile. However, he tightened his expression as he put Metherai inside the “Treasure Box” and took out Donner-Schlag. At the same time, Shia also put Orkan away and her hand reached Doryukken on her back.

The leaders of demonic beasts numbered around 100. Perhaps, because of the suicide assault, they began to lost their leadership on the subordinate demonic beasts as majority of them fall back.

The attacks from Metherai and Orkan, followed by Tio’s magic might made them thought they had lost their chance, and the demonic beasts began to march back.

To cover Hajime and Shia’ attack, Yue invoked her magic.

“”Thunder Dragon””

Immediately a dragon of thunder that created violent sparks and raised roars of thunderbolts appeared from the heaven which shrouded by dark cloud, and it infringed the frontline from the right to the left. The golden dragon opened its huge mouth, and seeing the group of demonic beasts annihilated as they voluntarily jumped, the following demonic beasts once again flinching. At that chance, Hajime and Shia charge at the crowd at once.

DOPANh! DOPANh! DOPANh! DOPANh! DOPANh! DOPANh!

Hajime used “Ground Shrinker” as he dashed on the ground and

successively fired Donner-Schlag. His eyes grasped the appearances from the small gap on the crowd, he fired the flashes of death and they reached the targets through the small gap as they hit right at the vital points without mercy.

Without even glancing at the demonic beasts in the frontline, somehow only the leaders in the back were mysteriously burst open one after another which made the surrounding demonic beasts halted. Then, a shadow suddenly appeared above one of the demonic beasts. Immediately, the demonic beasts looked up at the sky and there was a girl with fluttering rabbit ears and carrying a gigantic warhammer literally fell from the sky and jumped into the scene.

That girl was Shia, she stepped on the demonic beasts' heads and hopping just like a rabbit above the crowd. The last demonic beast's head she stepped on was crushed as she jumped grandly and she flew at once into the sky using Gravity magic to lightened her weight.

Following that, she turned around as she passed the zenith, she increased her weight several times at once and fall with tremendous power. Her targeted point was of course the location where several leaders were stiffened. Her free fall speed was accelerated further as the reaction from the outburst when she pulled Doryukken's trigger, and she used body strengthening to the limit to put the highest power into her attack. Then, the hammer that could be called the destruction incarnated fall down without even losing its momentum.

"RYAaAAAA!!!"

DOoGAaAAAA!!!

The attack which accompanied with lovely shout was just like a meteorite. The Brutal-type leader who received the direct hit was crushed to death as its head immediately reached the ground while flesh and blood were scattered by the violent impact. The flesh and blood slipped into the ground and stones which blown by the impact and returned to the ground as fertilizer. Following that, the same fate visited the crowding demonic beasts in the surroundings. Doryukken's overwhelming impact made the ground and stones flew just like bullets and scattered the fleshes which also returned into the ground just like before.

Shia was in the bottom of the crater she made herself and she used the reaction from the outburst to pull Doryukken which buried on the ground and at the same time she used the high-speed movement to move towards the demonic beasts and once again attacked each group's leader.

As expected, she didn't have the heart to just naively let the demonic beasts that did whatever they please away, and Shia crushed the surrounding meat wall to death. Shia used Doryukken's designed gimmick to further extended the handle by more than one meter and used the outburst to do high-speed revolution just like a spinning top. Following that, Doryukken which carried enough centrifugal force blown away the approaching mixed wall of meat.

Countless Brutals fluttered as they were blown away radially. The girl with delicate appearance easily blown away the many times bigger demonic beasts as if they were pingpong ball. The spectacle was just like a joke. Shia restored her body pose from the flow of gyration and she became depressed when she saw the targeted leaders were crushed from the gap of the blown away Brutals.

Then, in that moment, her rabbit ears caught a sound of something new approaching in high speed from the right rear. Without panicking, Shia timingly rotated her body and used Doryukken to intercept the ambush. But, the newcomers, demonic beasts with black-fur, four ruby-like eyes, and looked like wolves, were already expecting that as they immediately decelerated and splendidly avoid Shia's attack.

If they were normal demonic beasts, in theory they'd continued the attack and became corpses by the swung weapon. Actually, Shia also had thought of that as she concentrated her body strengthening on her legs, and she'd won by immediately jumping overhead the raid.

However, Shia's expectation was betrayed. Somehow the four-eyed wolves weren't jumped at Shia but Doryukken with their strong jaws as they used all of their might to pushed the ground to seal it. Of course such demonic beasts couldn't beat Shia's body strengthening. But, because she was surprised by the unexpected, her movement was sealed for a moment.

Thus the black, four-eyed wolves had enough time. The same kind of demonic beast was approaching as it opened its mouth filled with sharp fangs from Shia's back with a perfect timing. Shia opened her eyes wide and immediately released the body strengthening which concentrated on her legs towards her whole body. That because she was preparing to received the attacks.

At the moment those sharp fangs almost drenched by Shia's blood, something interrupted between Shia and the four-eyed wolf. With length of 60 cm and width of 40 cm, it was a metallic cross which

middle part was just like a round shield. That cross prevented the demonic beast's mouth from biting Shia.

Gari gari sound resounded and the demonic beast desperately tried to crunch the foreign object that jumped out all of a sudden, but the cross that emitted weak red light wasn't daunted at all. In the next moment, the demonic beast's lower jaw was blown off accompanied with roaring sound.

"GUuRUaAA!!!"

The cross soundlessly moved overhead the screaming and writhing demonic beast and a bullet pulverized the demonic beast's head accompanied with another roaring sound. In addition,

ZUDONh!!

Hearing the firing sound, Shia lightened her grip on Doryukken. Shia looked back at the four-eyed wolves who temporary closed off her path and their abdomens and heads were also shot through as they crumbled by another two crosses which floating mid-air.

""Shia, don't relax your guard. Among the demonic beasts, there were some whose movement are obviously different. There's not only brainwashed ones and the subordinates of demonic beasts. Take three of the Cross Bits with you. Annihilate the 27 on the right. The frontline will hold for five minutes for Yue.""

Shia finally caught up that she had escaped from the pinch and he received the “Telepathy” from Hajime. Hah, Shia who regained her senses was straightening herself and answered through the telepathy stone on her choker (Shia never thought of it as a collar).

“Roger! Also, I am saved. Thank you very much!”

“Ou, be careful.”

“… Fufu, recently, Hajime-san’s attitude becoming more and more softened. It is just one step away from it to become an accomplished fact!”

Having confirmed the communication was cut, Shia muttered that to herself as she smiled because the floating “Cross Bits” in the surroundings were as if they were protecting her. Following that, she psyched up and readied Doryukken, then she set out to annihilate the cautious leader which had different fur color from the demonic beasts from a while ago.

“Fuu, just as usual, she always got into some trouble, this girl…”

Muttering that, Hajime exterminated the demonic beasts with overwhelming force. There were four cross floating around Hajime.

“Cross Bit” was how Hajime called the floating crosses, they moved by the same principle as the Unmanned Reconnaissance Planes and their type specialized in attacking. Inside were loaded with gun

and rifle bullet, they were operated using the bracelet where seven induction stones were installed. Moreover, the surface was covered with mineral which endowed with “Vajra” using Creation magic, so they could become strong shields as they reacted on the magic power from induction stone.

Hajime, who used Gun＝Kata as he pleased while manipulating the Cross Bits at the same time, unfolded a storm of attacks without any room of escape. Already, 40 of the demonic beasts’ leaders were killed and there were demonic beasts who began to escape from the full-powered “Pressure.”

Then, a human’s shadow who screaming something towards the escaping demonic beasts in the distance was seen by Hajime at the edge of his view. Because it only put out its head from the ground, for a moment he thought it was someone’s severed head, but Hajime used “Farsight” and he certainly saw it move. That head was covered with black robe.

The black robed man, Shimizu was throwing a tantrum just like a child as he shouted at the escaping demonic beasts, then he began to recite something as he held up the artifact staff received in Imperial Palace. Of course, because there was no obligation to wait for the chant completion, Hajime fired Donner in his spare time and the staff was blown off in the middle. As the after effect, Shimizu was knocked and collapsed into the hole on the ground.

Thus although he didn’t know what Shimizu was trying to do, the black, four-eyed, wolf-type demonic beasts who were hidden inside the crowd and patiently waiting for the decisive gap around Hajime jumped at once. As expected, they had the potential of coordination ability that couldn’t be compared to the surrounding demonic beasts. It made him remembered the two-tailed wolf from

before.

Actually, Hajime feel they could be a good match if they fight against the two-tailed wolf. Although they didn't have peculiar magic to manipulate thunder and simply had inferior offensive power compared to the two-tailed wolf, sometime, they evaded the location Hajime attacked as if they knew about it, so their peculiar magic must be something along "Prediction" system. Following that, their coordination would make them the same level as the two-tailed wolf… in other words, it wasn't strange for the demonic beasts to be in the so-called low layer of the Abyss.

Why such demonic beasts here?, though there was such a doubt, he undertaking attacks, so it was just unnecessary thought for now. Hajime temporarily averted his thought from eliminating the leaders of the demonic beasts and concentrated on defeating the 12 black, four-eyed wolves.

Front, back, left, and right, furthermore there were black, four-eyed wolves who began to attack from above, so he rotated his body like a top and successively fired Donner-Schlag. They used "Prediction" to evaded from their spots, and Hajime also used "Prediction" to attack their next location. Even so, he was surprised that there were some that still capable to evade. Similar to the two-tailed wolf, they must have a method of communication like telepathy among their companions, and there might be some who looked over the battlefield.

Avoiding Hajime's shots, the four-eyed wolf leaped from the back because of the small gap when he reloaded mid-air, and one of the Cross Bits expanded just like flower petal and blown it away. Using that demonic beasts as stepping stone was another four-eyed wolf as it jumped, and the Cross Bit immediately became a shield to

obstructed it, then he shoot out the Shotgun from the elbow of his artificial left arm.

Inside the rain of flesh and blood, two Cross Bits concentrated barrage at one corner towards the encircling four-eyed wolves. When the encirclement opened by force, he slipped through using “Ground Shrinker” and shot to death the four-eyed wolves from the back which followed by Donner-Schlag further slaughtering another two because they had finished reloading.

Then, there was one that thrown away its body since the start and hurled its attacked body as it jumped towards Hajime. Hajime evaded by jumping sideway, shot the lower part of the demonic beast that came flying and blown off the four-eyed wolf that charging from its back. Taking a passive approach, Hajime immediately stood up and the four-eyed wolves opened their big mouths as if they had waited for this moment, then they tried to crunch Hajime with their fangs. It was a perfect timing. If seen from the side, it unmistakably could be seen that the four-eyed wolves’ mouths had settled on Hajime’s body.

However, at that time Hajime’s appearance started to sway and the four-eyed wolves’ mouths only gachin!, let out such sounds as they bit the empty space. Unbeknownst to them, Hajime’s body had advanced one step. Hajime shot through the abdomens of the four-eyed wolves he just passed through.

Furthermore, another four-eyed wolves leaped at Hajime, but it became the same as before, the place they attacked was wrong by a step. In each case, Hajime shot and blown them away as they passed each other.

The black, four-eyed wolves were as if they mistaken their eyes measurement and the chain of event completely became like that. It was the skill derived from Hajime's "Sign Interception" called "+Phantom Step". The effect was at the time he intercepted his presence and he'd leave his presence in the spot before he intercepted it for a few seconds. Because the real body's presence was intercepted, it'd be mistaken that he was still on his former location. Of course, because he merely shifted his presence, it was comparatively easier to notice if ones carefully observed him. But, in a fight which few comma of seconds could decided between victory and defeat, it was difficult for them to not be puzzled. The validity increased if the enemies were particularly sensitive towards presence.

Naturally, Hajime used "Light Speed" to control the Cross Bits, so no matter even if the black, four-eyed wolves were demonic beasts with Abyss-class power, they naturally weren't enemies for him. In the end, although the four-eyed wolves were probably Shimizu's trump card, they couldn't even grazed Hajime and annihilated in two minutes.

Hajime scattered the Cross Bits which killed the leaders with raging force. From the information the Cross Bits he put beside Shia in separated location, only several left before it ended in the other side. Even the demonic beasts that tried to charge towards the town were completely disallowed to drew near by Yue's thunder dragon.

After about two minutes, Hajime confirmed that they succeeded in eliminating the brainwashed demonic beasts. Then, having confirmed that, suu— he greatly inhaled and roared which coupled with "Magic Power Emission."

“KAaAAAAAAAAAAA!!!”

The huge roar and the surge of magic power ran through the battlefield. The overwhelming pressure attacked and shocked the demonic beasts’ minds and they feel huge instinctive fear. Following that, they noticed their groups’ leaders were already non-existence. After a moment of stiffening, they began to turn on their heels and desperately escaping towards the north while making a detour around Hajime.

The groups of demonic beasts which like a water current was as if parted by a rock on the river which was Hajime. Hajime confirmed his appearance with a sharp gaze, when he discovered Shimizu who seemed trying to escape using the last four-eyed wolf in the moment of confusion.

Hajime kneeled and firmly set Donner with both hands and successively pulled the trigger. The bullets ran through the air with miraculous time lag, the four-eyed wolf sneak a glance towards the sign of turbulence felt by “Prediction” and avoid the first attack, but it collapsed as the second attack shot through its big thigh. The impact made Shimizu blown away. Because his body’s specs were high, he immediately got up even though his body was struck hard. He rushed and shouted something towards the four-eyed wolf then he started to kick its head.

He probably shouted something about it should quickly stand up. He was obviously hysteric. After a while, maybe he was hinted by something to force the wolf to move, he began to chant as he put his hand on the black, four-eyed wolf’s head.

Hajime saw that, fired the railgun without the need to discuss, and

pierced where the black, four-eyed wolf was stopped. Shimizu who once again blown away because of the after effect was moving his limbs in panic, and this time he escaping by himself as he began to run towards the north just like the demonic beasts.

Hajime took out magic-driven two-wheeler, accelerated at once and caught up to Shimizu in the blink of the time. Shimizu looked back towards the KIiIII! sound behind him and he frantically moved his limbs to escape as he became stupefied by the bike which shouldn't be existed in this different world.

"What! What the hell! That's impossible! If it's true, the same hero as I- GUPEh!?"

The back of the head of Shimizu who frantically running while cursing was struck by Hajime's artificial arm with two-wheeler's momentum as is. Shimizu's face dived into the ground and slipped on the ground for several meters with killer whale-like posture before he stopped.

"Well then, what should I say to sensei? About this guy… and according to the situation, mine will…"

Hajime said that to himself as he tied up Shimizu using the wire from his artificial arm and return towards the town as is. The appearance of Shimizu who was dragged by the two-wheeler as he was painted by the scattered blood and fleshes of demonic beasts while creating a dust storm on the ruined ground… could be correctly said as a defeated soldier.

Arifureta: Volume 7 Chapter 3

Chapter 63 of the Web Novel.

Undesired Result

For Shimizu Yukitoshi, to be summoned to a different world was the dream he yearned for. Because he knew that was impossible, every day he was dreaming by a reading book in his hand or web novels. In his dream, he saved a lot of worlds, though he didn't know if he went towards the Happy End with the heroines. Inside Shimizu's room, the walls couldn't be seen as they were buried by posters of beautiful girls, and inside the glass rack at one of the walls were his favorite beautiful girl figures with improper poses lined up in such a cramped place. His bookshelf was filled with manga, light novels, thin books, and eroges, while the ones that couldn't be put there were all over the room as they made towers.

That's right, Shimizu Yukitoshi was a genuine otaku. However, there's no one among the classmates who knew that fact. That's because Shimizu himself thoroughly hid it. There was no need to talk about his reasons. He had seen the classmates' attitude towards Hajime, that's why there was no way he could become an open otaku.

Inside class, it could be said he was just a mob character by those who knew him well. There was no one he was especially close to, and he always quietly read a book in his seat. If he was talked to, he would give the minimum answer in a small mutter. To begin with, he kept the quiet attitude because he was bullied in junior high school. Maybe because it was the natural flow, he became a truant and stayed inside his own room every day, and he inevitable tried to create books and games to kill time. Even though his

parents always worried about him, he brought otaku goods into his room every day which made his big and little brother annoyed. They even showed that in their attitudes and words, which made Shimizu feel that the comforting house became worse, the so-called losing his place to stay. With such a gloomy environment, Shimizu thought of doing devious things to others inside his mind without letting it out on the surface. Thus he became more and more devoted into delusions and book creation.

Because he was like that, when he understood the summoning to a different world was the truth, his mind's state was as if shouting, "Here it come–!!". Even at the time Aiko protested fiercely against Ishtar, or when Kouki passionately decided to help humanity win and return to their original world, inside Shimizu's head were only the delusions of the real him doing spectacular things in this different world. He was elated because the delusions he thought as impossible had become truth, and the pattern of being summoned to a different world where the protagonist was being unreasonably demanded was driven away from his mind.

Thus it actually became just as he expected, there was a conflict in this different world life for real. First, Shimizu certainly kept a certain cheat-like spec as a secret, but that was the same thing for the other classmates. Furthermore, Kouki was the "hero," not him and maybe because of that the women only kept coming near Kouki, and it became the saying that "he was just one of the many additional people." With this, nothing changed from the time he was in Japan. Though his wish was fulfilled, the reality that didn't become just like he hoped for made Shimizu increase his deviousness, and his dissatisfaction was increasing in his mind.

Just why am I not the hero? Just why do the women only surround and desire Kouki? Just why is it not I, but Kouki who always gets treated as special? Even though I can do better if I am the hero. Then, the girls will accept me if I approach them… this, this

satisfying condition is everyone's fault, I am the only special one, that's the egoistic idea which gnawed on Shimizu's mind.

At that time. The combat practice held in the « Orcus Great Dungeon ». Shimizu thought of it as his chance. I won't mind about anyone else. It was the same even if they are here or not. Those classmates that treated me as background will surely notice my skill, Shimizu tried to use this opportunity… however, there was something he noticed.

He wasn't a special existence at all, there was no opportunity-like development, and he certainly would become a "dead" person in the next moment. As he was about to be killed by the Traum Soldier, he saw the "hero" who fought with a more brutal monster in the distance, and his fantasy about a different world crumbled as it made a rattling sound.

Then he witnessed the classmate who fell to "death" into the abyss, and his heart was broken. He only interpreted things on his own convenience and his mind always kept seeing others inferior than him, so naturally his heart was not strong.

When he returned to the royal palace, Shimizu once again shut himself in his own room. However, the literacies that could cheer him up just like in his room in Japan were not here. That's why Shimizu naturally spent his time reading books around the skills and magic concerning his class, "Dark Magic-user."

Dark magic system was a magic system which acted on the others' minds and senses, it was recognized as magic that basically give bad statuses to the target in battle. Shimizu's aptitude were such as altering the others' recognition, showing illusions, interfering with

the image of the completed magic to disrupt the invocation, and with further mastering, he could make disorder in one's body control.

Thus the depression in his heart was completely blown away as he read the books, and Shimizu immediately recalled something. Can I brainwash someone if I master dark magic?, something like that. Shimizu was excited. If his assumption was correct, he could do whatever he wants to anyone. That's right, whatever he wants. The stagnating darkness spread in Shimizu's mind. Since that day, he zealously trained with undivided attention.

However, it didn't easily go his way. First, for something with strong ego like a human, he needed to continuously apply the spell for several hours or else he could not do the brainwashing. Naturally, that was if there was no resistance. As expected, there's no one who wouldn't react if he put the spell. It was necessary for him to put the target in a sleep-like state. If the target was a human, it would be too hard for him to hide and control brainwashing, circumstance-wise and time-wise. As he thought of what happened when he was found out, Shimizu couldn't help but abandoning this because of the high risk.

Shimizu drooped his shoulders, but he immediately recalled about the reason he was summoned, the demon race could control demonic beasts. He wondered if he could brainwash the demonic beasts who moved by instinct and have small egos compared to humans. To confirm it, Shimizu went outside the Imperial Capital and repeatedly experimented on small fry demonic beasts. As the result, he proved that it was far easier to brainwash them compared to humans. To begin with, he could only do it because Shimizu was one of the cheaters and had an extremely high talent in dark magic. Previously, Ishtar had said that even if the people of this spent much time, they could only control 1-2 things.

Shimizu who had finished the experiments in the Imperial Capital's outskirts thought it'd be good if he could control strong demonic beasts. However, he felt intimidated to go towards the dungeon frontline just like Kouki's party. Then at the time he was at lost of what to do, he heard the talk about Aiko's bodyguards. If he joined them, he'd be able to encountered a good demonic beast or so he thought.

In the end, Aiko's party came to Ul town, then he heard about the demonic beasts in the mountain ranges area in the north and he was lost in greed when he thought to make them his subordinates. In their next meeting, everyone would be in awe and respect towards his great achievement, and he'd be treated as special or so his delusion went.

Normally, for the short amount of time of around two weeks, no matter if Shimizu was a genius in dark magic, and he used the efficient method by only brainwashing the leader of the groups, 1,000 was the limit. Moreover, it would only be those in Brutal's level in the second mountain range.

However, he was helped by a certain existence, and he was able to control Tio, who gave her power to Shimizu to efficiently brainwash even the demonic beasts in the fourth mountain range by chance. And at the same time, that certain existence promised him to reinforce him with troops of demonic beasts every day, and Shimizu's bound of reasoning completely came off. Finally, as he was soaked in joy that he was indeed special, the large crowd in his full control was turned towards the town.

Thus as the result…

He was turned into such misery for those who saw him, and he was made to kneel in front of Aiko and the others. By the way, the reason why he looked like a defeated soldier was because Hajime dragged him using magic-driven two-wheeler on the ground which covered with demonic beasts' flesh and blood coupled with the fluttering cloud of dust. Shimizu was unconscious with the white of his eyes displayed, and when they saw he was brought to the town with his head repeatedly hitting the ground, Aiko and the others' expressions were cramped.

By the way, their current location was in the outskirts and in this location were only Aiko, the students, several people from the bodyguard Knights and town leaders, Will, and Hajime's party. As expected, if the mastermind behind the attack was brought to the town, the commotions would become bigger and it'd be difficult to hold a conversation or so their reason. The town leaders which remained inside the town were currently busy with post treatment.

Aiko had stepped up towards Shimizu who was collapsed with the white of his eyes shown. His appearance which wearing a black robe, following by the fact he was dragged back directly from the battlefield became unassailable proofs that he was the culprit behind the attack. It was a fact she didn't want to believe as Aiko's expression warped in sadness, and she shook Shimizu to woke him up.

David and the others told her to stop it because it was dangerous, but she shook her head to refuse them. The same thing happened with the restraint. It was released because she wouldn't be able to hold a good talk with Shimizu with that on. In the end, Aiko was only wanted to talk as a teacher and a student.

Before long, Shimizu's consciousness begin to return from Aiko's call. He looked at the surrounding with a blank look, and maybe because he understood his situation, Hah, he raised his upper body. He immediately tried to distance himself, but maybe because the damage on the back of his head, he staggered and fell on his butt, then backed away as is. With caution and abjection, he had a mixed expression with irritation excluded, and he looked around.

"Shimizu-kun, please calm down. There is no one here that will harm you… sensei only want to talk with Shimizu-kun. Just why did you do that… I don't mind if we talk about something else. Will you, let sensei hear Shimizu-kun's feelings?"

Because Aiko matched her gaze to Shimizu, he stopped looking around. Following that, he averted his eyes and looked down then spoke with voice that couldn't be heard easily… rather he started cursing.

"Why? You still don't understand that. That's why this guys and that guys are so incompetent. Treating me like an idiot… the hero, that hero is annoying. Even though I could do better if it's me… unnoticed, and treated like a mob character… honestly, there are only idiots… that's why I thought of showing my worth…"

"You… know your place! You almost destroy the town!"

"That's right! If you are talking about idiot, it is you!"

"Think how much you made Ai-chan-sensei worried!"

Far from reflecting, Shimizu was cursing out his dissatisfaction to the surrounding, so Tamai, Sonobe, and the other students were angry and said their objection one after another. Maybe because he was pressured by their momentum, Shimizu looked more and more down and assumed silence.

Because Aiko couldn't stand Shimizu looked like that, she tried to held down the further heating up students, and questioned Shimizu with a voice which carried as much warm as possible.

"I see, you have a lot of dissatisfaction… however, Shimizu-kun. If it's about triumphing over everyone, that made sensei don't understand it even more. Why, did you tried to attack the town? If you attacked the town as is… a lot of people will be dead… aside on how you subdued a lot of demonic beasts, that cannot show your "worth.""

Aiko's justifiable question made Shimizu slightly looked up and his dreary, dark eyes turned towards Aiko from the gaps of his dirtied forelock which hanged down, then he floated a faint smile.

"… I can show it… if it's to the Demon race."

"Wh-!?"

Those unexpected words which came out from Shimizu's mouth made not only Aiko, excluding Hajime and his party, everyone in that place were shocked. Shimizu raised a satisfied expression when he saw their appearances, and though it was the same as before, he began to talk with a voice that stronger than the

previous pressure which made him shut up.

“To capture the demonic beast, I went to the mountain range area in the north alone. At that time, I met a person from demon race. At the beginning, of course I was cautious… but that Demon race wanted to talk to me. Then, we came to an understanding. That guy know my true worth. That’s why I came to that guy… demon race’s side and made a contract.”

“A contract… you say? What do you mean?”

Aiko was shaken by the fact he was connected to the Demon race, their enemy in war, but she was sure that the Demon race must have coaxed her student and she asked that while restraining her anger.

Looking at Aiko, Shimizu was grinning as if he saw something amusing, then he said the impactful words.

“… Hatanaka-sensei… it is to kill you.”

“… Eh?”

For a moment, Aiko didn’t understand what he had said as she spontaneously let out that silly voice. The same thing happened to everyone there, they became stupefied for a moment, they understood the meaning earlier than Aiko, and stared at Shimizu with fury in their eyes.

Shimizu ducked for a moment from the piercing glares which filled with strong anger from the students and the guard Knights, but he stopped mid-way and continued his words as if to shake off their glares.

“What’s with that expression. Did you think I was used by the demon race? In certain ways, you’re a more troublesome existence than the hero… “Goddess of Good Harvest”… if I make it looked like you killed the townspeople, I will be welcomed to demon race’s side as a “hero.” It’s that kind of contract. My ability is amazing after all. They said it’d be too wasteful for me to be under that hero. As expected, the one who understands it will understand. Actually, they also lent me strong demonic beasts, and I was able to create an army that exceeded my imagination… that’s why, that’s why I thought can absolutely kill you! What’s with that! What the heck was that! Why an army of 60,000 was defeated! Why those weapons existed in this different world! You, just what on earth are you!”

Because of the ridicule at the beginning, Aiko could only stare blankly at Shimizu, her student when he said the word “kill,” and maybe because he was agitated as he spoke, he began to shout when he looked at Hajime. Inside his eyes were something more than melancholy and abjection, the irritation because nothing went according to his desire, the hatred towards Hajime who obstructed him, following that, the envy towards that power were mixed, mixed and created his madness.

Apparently, Shimizu didn’t notice the gray-haired, eye-patched boy before him was Nagumo Hajime, his classmate. To begin with, it could be said it couldn’t be helped because he never talk to him…

Shimizu kept glaring and cursing at Hajime as if he would attack

him at any moment, and Hajime who suddenly became the target could hear Shimizu cursing as “Even though you’re just a chuuni character,” and actually he got a considerably deep damage as he looked at the distance to escape the reality. His attitude could be seen as, “I don’t think anything of you,” so it caused Shimizu to agitated further.

Having guessed Hajime’s feeling, his back was patted by Yue and her kindness made him want to cry again.

Maybe thanks to Hajime ignoring the serious mood and entering his own world(?), Aiko was given the time to regain her sense from the impact, she took one deep breath and even without any courage to confront his rage, she didn’t move from her spot then grasped Shimizu’s hand, and talked quietly.

“Shimizu-kun. Please calm down.”

“Wh-What’s with you! Let go!”

He was surprised by the sudden touch and Shimizu immediately tried to shake her off, but Aiko said she wouldn’t let go and further increased the power of her grip. Maybe because Shimizu couldn’t look back at Aiko’s serious gaze, he gradually calmed down as he looked down again, and his expression was hidden by his forelock.

“Shimizu-kun… I have understood your feelings. You want to be “special.” Your feelings aren’t mistaken. It was a natural wish for a human. Following that, you surely can become “special.” After all, although your method was mistaken, it is the truth that you can do that much… however, don’t go to the demon race’s side. Having heard your story, that demon race was just trying to use your

desire. Sensei, can't entrust her important student to that kind of person at all… Shimizu-kun. Let's do it over, okay? I don't want anyone to fight, but if Shimizu-kun wish for it, sensei will support you. If it is you, you definitely can fight as equal with Amanogawa-kun and the others. Then, some day, let's return together when we found the method to return to Japan, okay?"

Shimizu heard Aiko speaking in silence, and before one knew it his shoulders trembled. Even the students and the guard Knights thought Shimizu was shaken by Aiko's words and began to cry. Actually, Sonobe Yuka, who famous to be easily moved to tears in the class, was already crying when she saw Aiko and Shimizu.

However, it wasn't something sweet as it wouldn't simply went her way. Aiko patted the trembling Shimizu's head with gentle expression, but Shimizu suddenly gripped the outstretched hand in return and pulled her, then he turned her over and coiled his arm around Aiko's neck. Aiko unintentionally groaned because her arm was bound behind her and he took out a 10 cm long needle from god-knows where, then he pointed it at back of her neck.

"Don't move! Or I will pierce it!"

Shimizu shouted hysterically. His expression was twitching in convulsion, in his eyes had the same madness when he was cursing Hajime. His previously trembling shoulders was apparently from laughter.

Aiko looked in pain because she was unable pull apart Shimizu's arm which coiled on her throat. The surrounding people desperately stopped their movement after they received Shimizu's warning. From Shimizu's appearance, they understood he would

seriously do that for real. Everyone worriedly called Aiko's name with regretting tone, and Shimizu continued to ridicule them.

Incidentally, Hajime finally returned to reality at this time. Because he was on the trip to escape the reality up until now, his face said, "Oya? Since when…," because of the sudden development.

"Listen, this is a poisonous needle I got from a demonic beast in the northern mountain range! She'll only suffer for a few minute before she die if I pierce it! If you understand, then everyone must throw away their weapons and raise your hands!"

With the words from the maddened Shimizu, the surrounding people turned pale. Shimizu was grinning at the students and guard Knights who completely couldn't move, and he turned his glance towards Hajime.

"Oi, you, chuuni bastard, you! Not on your back! I am talking about you! Don't take me for a fool, you bastard! If you keep joking around, I'll really kill her! If you understand, give me your gun! The other arms too!"

Because the way Shimizu called him was too cruel, he inadvertently looked back appealing, "It's not me," which ended as futile, and Hajime face looked so unpleased. In spite of the tense situation, his attitude didn't change as he was calm, and Shimizu lost his temper because he thought he was taken for a fool again. Thus hysterically, he demanded Hajime to hand over his firearms.

Hajime returned to look at Shimizu with extremely cold eyes when

he heard that.

“Well, you, to say you won’t kill her… to begin with, you can’t go to the demon race’s side if you don’t kill sensei, so you’re going to kill her anyway, right? That’s why I won’t hand them over.”

“Shut up, shut up, shut up! Just be quiet and hand them over! An idiot like you should just do what I said! Th-That’s right, hehe, oi, give me your slave too. Let her carry the firearms!”

With his calm returning, Shimizu shouted some more. Because he was too cornered, he couldn’t do a normal judgement anymore. Shia, who marked down by Shimizu, was trembling and her expression displayed her disgust.

“Even if I fired three times in succession to shut you up, you’ll only become more creepy… rather, Shia, even if you’re disgusted don’t hide behind me. He isn’t that dreadful.”

“But, he is really disgusting… it can be said my mind can’t accept it… just look, those pimples. It’s impossible to not feel disgust.”

“Well, though he wish to be a hero, his lines were the same as the thief that was killed easily by the protagonist in the very beginning after all.”

Though the person in question couldn’t hear because they lowered their volumes, everyone could hear them because as her disgusted

eyes and their volumes were becoming louder. Shimizu could only flapped his mouth and his complexion gradually dyed in red, then it changed to blue, and in the end it turned white. It was an example of the change in complexion because of the anger which became too high.

Shimizu began to mutter, “I am a hero, I am special, this guys and that guys are just idiots, everything are those guys’ fault, there’s no problem, everything will go as I wished, I am a hero after all, I am special,” with hollow eyes, following that, he suddenly let out a high-pitched laugh as if he was shaken free of something.

“… Shi-Shimizu-kun… let us talk… after all… everything is okay…”

Even though Aiko was in pain as she was exposed to Shimizu’s crazed antique, she let out those words, and at the moment he heard that, Shimizu completely stopped his laugh and strangled Aiko further.

“… How annoying. Stop trying to be a good person, you hypocrite. Just shut up and become a tool for me to escape from here.”

Shimizu muttered that with a dark tone and he looked at Hajime again. Without any agitation or other expressions, he looked at Hajime with eyes filled with negative feelings, next he saw the gun in the holster on his thigh. What he wanted was transmitted without the need for words. If he falter here, he could just disregard his life and death and, no, his good future would be only a dream if he didn’t harm Aiko.

Hajime leaked a sigh, he thought to fire the wire when he passed the gun and used “Lightning-clad” even if Aiko got involved, but he slowly reached Donner-Schlag so as to not stimulated Shimizu. Because Aiko body was small, she couldn’t become a shield, and it was possible for Hajime to hit Shimizu before he realize with his drawing speed, he thought it’d be okay to be looked by Aiko with slightly hurt eyes.

But, at the moment Hajime started to drop his hand, the situation suddenly changed.

“Kh!? Don’t! Avoid it!”

As she shouted that, Shia strengthened her body to the best of her ability and momentarily achieved a high-speed movement on Ground Shrinker level, and she jumped towards Aiko.

Because of the abruptness, Shimizu immediately tried to pierce the needle into Aiko. Shia was doing the impossible by pulling Aiko and twisted her body to protect her from something, then a blue colored water current penetrated through Shimizu’s chest and that laser-like thing passed over the place in which Aiko’s head where a while ago almost simultaneously.

Hajime, who was inside the trajectory, used Donner to defend against the laser of water that probably the offensive magic called “Break” from water system. Then about Shia, she vigorously charged as she embraced Aiko closely, as is, she slipped and dived into the ground with her shoulder. She raised a dust storm, and Shia who finally stopped, “Uguh,” raised a pained groan and remained lying.

“Shia!”

Among everyone who was stiffened by the sudden development, Yue ran with all of her might as she called Shia’s name. Following that, she took a position to protect Shia and the woman she embraced, Aiko from another attack.

Hajime didn’t say anything and only thanked and praised Yue in his mind because she moved just as he hoped for, then he held Donner with both hand while he used “Farsight” to trace the trajectory of that “Break.” Immediately, he saw a black clothed man with pointed ears and swept-back hair who rode on a huge bird-like demonic beast in the distance.

DOPANh! DOPANh! DOPANh! DOPANh! DOPANh! DOPANh!

In a flash, Hajime successively fired the railgun towards the flying demonic beast and the silhouette. The man with swept-back hair, as if he had anticipated the attack, made the bird-like demonic beast desperately evade by doing barrel roll as he confirmed Hajime’s location. It was quite an agile demonic beasts, but it couldn’t evaded everything and one of the bird-like demonic beast’s leg was blown off, the swept-back man’s shoulder was also blown off. Even so, rather than falling, its speed didn’t slowed and it aimed to escape at full speed. It could only said the way it escape from the series of attacks as nothing but splendid.

Hajime guessed that the man probably the person from Demon race from Shimizu’s talk. The man already detoured to the town in low altitude as if he was making the town as a shield, then vanished.

From the method he used to escape from Hajime's bullets, it seemed the information about Hajime and his party were already known by the Demon race which made Hajime raised a bitter expression. Because he escaped towards Uldeia lake, it'd be too difficult to pursuit him using unmanned reconnaissance plane if he escaped through the forest. Above all, that's not his current priority.

"Hajime!"

Maybe because Yue had also guessed the enemy escaped, she called Hajime with a voice which contained impatience unlike the usual.

Hajime put Donner back into the holster, and ran up to Shia without even looking at the collapsed Shimizu. Shia was faced-up as she was rested on Yue's laps and her expression warped in pain. Aiko beside her also showed similar expression as she was embraced by Yue.

"Ha-Hajime-san… ukh… I… am… okay… p-please, sensei-san was… grazed by the poisonous needle…"

There was a hole with three centimeters in diameter in Shia's flank. Even though the bleeding was suppressed by body strengthening, it could be understood that she was in considerable pain from the amount of sweat flowed in her face. However, she floated a forced smile and told to give priority to Aiko with a shaking voice.

When he saw Aiko, her complexion was completely paled, and her limbs began to convulse. Maybe because she heard Shia and

Hajime's conversation, Aiko desperately shook her neck, appealing to let Shia treated first. She couldn't let out any word because the poison had already spreaded. If Shimizu's words were correct, she only had several minutes, no, it'd be less than a minute looking from Aiko's appearance. She didn't want to make more trouble as it was already too late.

Hajime averted his gaze away from Aiko and unhesitatingly nodded at Shia, then he let out a vial from "Treasure Box." At that time, the surrounding people finally ran up towards Hajime and the others with uneasy expressions as they let out cries from their mouths. The students, David, and the Knights were particularly shaken, they were half in panic. They were asking Hajime about her safety, stepped back when they saw her appearance, and tried to cast recovery magic which was ineffective… towards such people, Hajime's one word, "Silence," with killing pressure made them stepped back and keep silent.

Even Hajime was slightly surprised by what he had said. His anger because Shia's injury was more than he expected. Apparently, without him noticing it, he had recognized her as an important companion deep in his heart. Therefore, he was unbearably angry towards the Demon race that came in contact with Shimizu and himself who had forgotten the possibility of him still nearby.

If he do something to Aiko and the others when Hajime's party went to the frontline, the possibility it become a chaos was high. However, because he actually didn't do anything, he was convinced that he didn't want to do it directly, without any basis to it.

As a matter of fact, that demon race person have thought to assassinate Aiko when Shimizu was on rampage, but he lost the chance because he was stupefied by Hajime's party which was out

of the normal. Afterwards, as he was looking for a chance, the talk between Shimizu and Aiko started. Thus he thought to leave killing Aiko to Shimizu as he looked from the distance, but he guessed that Aiko would be recaptured in the last moment by the unstandard Hajime, so he cast a magic which specialized in penetration to pierce Shimizu and Aiko.

However, even though the Demon race was quick to see that opportunity, there was one miscalculation. That was, if thing went well the trajectory would make it hit Hajime and the others, erasing those risk factors at the same time, but Shia's peculiar magic was activated. That was "Foresight." Shia who was behind Hajime naturally would be hit by the trajectory along with Shimizu, Aiko, and Hajime, so she dashed out to "break" the future she saw.

Thanks to that, the future where the attack went through Aiko's head and she immediately died was avoided. Shia had put her body in the line to change that future. Even though he was doubtful on why she put her life for Aiko who wasn't not intimate with her, Hajime would not treat an important companion who had worked her best coldly. Therefore, he unhesitatingly used the scarce "Holy Water" for Aiko. Because there was no time, it was the most certain thing to use.

Hajime held Aiko who was supported by Yue, put the vial in her mouth and poured the holy water little by little. Aiko looked at Hajime who didn't take Shia as the top priority with criticizing glare, but ignored by Hajime. Currently, he prioritized Shia's will than Aiko's or his own intention. That's why he just poured the holy water as discussion wasn't necessary. However, Aikos' whole body began to convulse and couldn't be moved as she desired, so she couldn't swallow the water. Rather, it was possible to enter the lungs and made her vomit.

Hajime judged it was impossible for Aiko to swallow the holy water by herself, he put the remaining holy water inside his mouth, and he unhesitatingly poured it directly into Aiko's mouth.

"Kh!?"

Aiko opened her eyes wide. Next, screams and angry voices raised by everyone in Hajime's surrounding. However, Hajime ignored all of those and he twined his tongue that invaded Aiko's mouth, then he forcefully poured the holy water. Hajime's expression didn't contain any shame or guilt, there was only seriousness about doing what had to be done.

Before long, Aiko's throat moved as to swallow and the holy water flowed inside her body. Following that, the pain which attacking her body and the cold feeling as her life was going to be washed away were blown away as if a fire was lighted in her core and started to spread around. Aiko remembered the feeling of being soaked inside the hot spring in the cold winter, and her body shook. It was just as expected of the holy water. It was a miraculous water that prevent his body broken from eating the flesh and blood of demonic beasts. The effect was preeminent.

Not long after, the mouth to mouth ended just in the blink of time, and Hajime separated his mouth from Aiko's. Silver colored string appeared between the two. Hajime observed Aiko. His purpose was to ascertain that she had escaped from the crisis. On the other side, Aiko was still looking at Hajime blankly as her eyes were unfocused.

“Sensei.”

“…”

“Sensei?”

“…”

“Oi! Sensei!”

“Fue!?”

Hajime called Aiko to ask her condition, but Aiko keep blankly looked at him and unmoving. Hajime was irritated, so he lightly slapped her cheek and raised his volume, then she raised an indescribably lovely voice and regained her senses.

“How’s your body? Are there any sense of incompatibility?”

“Heh? A, um, that’s, I am o-o-o-okay. There is no abnormality, rather I feel good… wait, th-that’s wrong! By no mean that, th-that thing feel good, what I mean was the medicine’s effect-”

“I see. Then, that’s good.”

Hajime looked as if he’d lose his temper, and answered simply towards Aiko who said there was no abnormality in her physical condition, then he simply removed the hand which supported Aiko and moved towards Shia.

Although she was stupefied by Hajime's attitude, Aiko didn't stay in that spot and she had run towards Shia before she aware of it.

Hajime took out another holy water and poured half of it directly into Shia's wound, and the other half was brought close to Shia's mouth to let her drink it. The injured parts make a small shuu-sound and recovered rapidly, but somehow Shia didn't want to drink the holy water and shook her head.

"Ha-Hajime-san…"

"Shia, wha-…"

"Me too… it'll be better… guh… to do it mouth to mouth…"

"Y-you are always like this…"

As she was drenched in sweat because of the pain, Shia leaked out her desire. Even if I am rolled around, I won't get up until you do that!, she said those kind of demand, and even Hajime was amazed by this. As expected, there's no need to purposely do mouth to mouth because it was unnecessary, so he ignored the silent complaint from Yue who was nice to Shia recently and thrust the vial into Shia's mouth.

"Muguh!? … gulp gulp… puhah… Uu~, Hajime-san is unfair… I

am jealous of sensei-san…”

“Hajime… bad.”

“Fue!? Sh-Shia-san, you’re wrong! That’s a lifesaving action! It is different from what Shia-san want! I am a teacher after all!”

She received sulky gaze and words from Shia and scolding from Yue to read the mood, but Aiko whose face redden purposely made excuses, and Hajime could only let out, “Haa～”, a profound sigh which contained both relief and amazement.

Following that, the outfielders who had guessed thing had settled began to make noise again because, everyone probably recalled the pitiful existence which had been forgotten. It was particularly important for Aiko. So Aiko probably didn’t forget him and just didn’t understand what had happened all of a sudden.

Hajime called out to a guard Knight who was nearest to Shimizu.

“… You, is Shimizu still alive?”

With those words, everyone went “Ah,” with expressions as if they just remembered about him and they looked at the collapsed Shimizu. Only Aiko displayed a perplexed look and said, “Eh? Eh?,” as she looked around, she might’ve recalled the situation when Shia snatched her. With mixed complexion, she panicky run towards Shimizu.

“Shimizu-kun! Aa, this is… so cruel.”

In Shimizu’s chest was a hole similar to Shia’s. The bleeding was intense, and there was a big pool of blood… he probably only had a few minutes left.

“I-I don’t want to die… h-help… if it’s like this… no… I can’t believe it…”

Shimizu spoke to Aiko who held his hand by his side, it was just monologue of words which couldn’t be understood in a muttering whisper. Aiko looked at the surrounding for help, but all of them averted their eyes. It was already hopeless. Moreover, the expressions of not wanting to help vividly appeared on them.

Aiko clinged to the last straw as she looked back and shouted to the Hajime who was there.

“Nagumo-kun! That medicine from before! If it is now-! Please!”

Hajime had expected Aiko’s words and muttered, “It really came to this…,” along with a sigh, then he moved towards Aiko and Shimizu. Following that, he questioned Aiko even though he know what the answer would be.

“Do you want to help him, sensei? He was going to kill you, you

know? I think it had crossed the limit no matter how much a "teacher" you are."

He was someone who tried to kill her, but she protected him just because he was her student, just how many people could became a "teacher" like her in such desperation. She might already be at an abnormal level for a "teacher." Aiko accurately read the meaning behind his question, her eyes shaken for a moment, then she answered in a firm expression.

"Certainly, it might be as you had said. No, it is surely as you had said. However, I just want to be that (…) kind of teacher. I will be the students' ally no matter what happen, I have vowed to become that kind of teacher. Therefore, Nagumo-kun-…"

Hajime became ill-humored as he scratched his head because the answer just as he expected, and he sighed in reluctance because that's just how Aiko-sensei was. Following that, he looked at the sky as he thought of something for a while, he took one deep breath and went towards Shimizu's side with a resolute expression.

"Shimizu. Can you hear me? I have something that can save you."

"!"

"However, there's something I want to ask first."

"…"

Hearing the words he could be saved, Shimizu responded by stopping his mutters and his wandering eyes were staring at Hajime. In a beat, Hajime asked a simple question.

"… Are you… an enemy?"

Shimizu immediately shook his head without any hesitation. Following that, he floated a smile of abjection and began to plead for his life.

"I-I am not your enemy… I-I won't do… anything… I will do whatever you want… so help me, I-I'll even give you an army… and even… brainwash the women… I-I swear… I swear to be loyal… I'll do anything… so help me…"

With those words, Hajime became expressionless. Following that, he could be seen looking into Shimizu's eyes quietly as if trying to confirm his real intention. Shimizu who thought he was seeing the depth of his heart immediately looked away. However, Hajime was able to confirm it. There's darkness and impurity more than before inside Shimizu's eyes. They were saturated by hatred, anger, envy, desire, and other negative feelings, they were just like the deep sea where the light did not reach.

Hajime was convinced. Aiko's words didn't even reach Shimizu's mind. Therefore Shimizu would surely become their enemy. He had determined that. For a moment, his gaze matched Aiko's. Aiko was also looking at Hajime and their gaze met. Following that, Aiko was immediately able to guess what Hajime was going to do. Her expression changed and she jumped out to stop Hajime.

“DON’T!”

However, Hajime was much faster.

DOPANh! DOPANh!

“Kh!?”

The sound where a breath was taken away. It wasn’t known who let that out. One in the head and one in the heart. The bullets which accurately shot made Shimizu’s body jumped for a moment, and they awarded him with death.

Inside the lingering gunshot, no one let out a word, and they could only watch Hajime silently looking at the corpse with a gun in one hand that raised white smoke, in blank surprise. Silence ruled their vicinity, within those who could not move, a mutter was leaked.

“… Why?”

It was Aiko. In a blank surprise, she watched the remains of Shimizu who had began his travel to the death, and she raised that question. Hajime looked away from Shimizu and he looked at Aiko. At the same time, Aiko matched Hajime’s gaze again. Inside her eyes, anger, sadness, distrust and others feelings were raised and disappeared, then they raised and disappeared once again.

“He is an enemy after all.”

Hajime’s answer towards Aiko’s question was truly simple.

“That! Shimizu-kun is-…”

“Reforming? Sorry to burst your bubble, I am not so good natured to believe that, above all my eyes aren’t clouded at all.”

When he asked the last question, Shimizu’s eyes was telling him that he had “fall.” Before death, his mind still moved towards killing Aiko, Hajime thought Shimizu could slightly change his way of life because just like the time when Hajime almost fell, there’s Yue’s existence that was capable of holding and retaining him, so… he questioned Shimizu with that thought in mind. If that was so, he had consider to give Shimizu a chance by putting into him a collar and letting Aiko take custody of him. However, even before death, Shimizu’s eyes didn’t even show such sign.

Aiko should also feel that. However, Aiko was the “teacher,” by no means could she abandon him. She just couldn’t do that.

“Therefore, rather than killing him-! If he is kept inside the royal palace, and returned together with us to Japan, possibly… there’s the possibility-!”

“… Even if I tried to give you a reason, I know sensei won’t agree to it at all. I have killed sensei’s important student. It’s okay for

sensei to decide whatever you want to do about me."

"… Such a thing is-"

"'A lonely way of life.' I've thought of various things because of sensei's words. However, in this world where a person's life is cruelly light, I thought of not showing any mercy towards my enemy… and I won't change that. I don't think I want to change that. I have no time for that."

"Nagumo-kun…"

"I'll do the same thing from now on. At the times I think it is necessary… I'll pull the trigger no matter how many times it'll be. If you thought I was mistaken… sensei only has to do what you want… however, I want you to remember one thing. Even if it's sensei or the other classmates… I'll pull the trigger if you become my enemy…"

Aiko looked down as she bit her lip. It was no one but Aiko who said, "Having heard my talk, I won't refute whatever your decision is." No more word coming out. Hajime looked at such Aiko and he turned his feet because the things needed to be done here had finished. Yue and Shia quietly nestled close to him. Accompanied with Pressure, Hajime looked at Will, Aiko, and the other's appearances, and because there's also the matter of post treatment, they silently followed Hajime in painful reluctance.

The town leaders and Knights' had a purpose to detain Hajime and his artifacts, but because of the overflowing "Pressure" and

remembering the previous monster-like fight, they withdrew their hands and swords.

“Nagumo-kun!… Sensei is… sensei is…”

Even if her words weren’t continued, he called out Hajime’s name because of her pride as a “teacher.” Hajime stopped for a while and spoke to Aiko over his shoulder.

“… Sensei’s ideal is already a fantasy. However, we are glad that sensei remains as our teacher even if the world had changed… if possible, please don’t give up.”

Following that, this time he didn’t stop and came off from the surrounding circle, he took out magic-driven four-wheeler and escaped from there when everyone had boarded it.

Afterwards, what remained was the clamor from the town that was joyed for their survival and the the indescribably subtle mood.

Arifureta: Volume 7 Chapter 4

Chapter 64 of the Web Novel.

Inside the Returning Vehicle

The magic-driven four-wheeler dashed onto the highway while raising a storm of dust, with the Northern Mountain Ranges at its back. Because it was a road treaded by many people over the span of many years, it was in far better condition compared to the road from UI town to the Northern Mountain Ranges area. Thanks to the suspensions he installed, the vibrations were dulled and the four-wheeler advanced smoothly towards Fhuren.

Shia was seated in the front seat and her rabbit ears were flapping in the wind thanks to the fully opened windows. She looked somewhat displeased since she liked the two-wheeler more than the four-wheeler. After all, she liked the feeling of her rabbit ears cutting through the wind and embracing Hajime while resting her face on his shoulder.

Naturally, Hajime was the driver. The seat beside him was, of course, Yue's. Will was seated in the back seat.

Will anxiously asked Hajime, while slightly leaning his body forward, "Excuse me~, was it really okay to leave them like that? If you only spoke a little more about it… especially towards Aiko-dono…"

Without turning his head, Hajime answered indifferently, “Nn～? Not really, everything is okay. After all, there would be only more trouble if I stay there… Sensei can also make good decisions even if I am not there.”

“… It’s probably as you said, but…”

“You… setting aside whether or not you’re a good person… aren’t you too concerned about others?”

Even though he heard Hajime’s words, Will still wore an anxious expression, which made Hajime smile wryly. To truly be in pain and crying for the dead adventurers, not to mention remaining in an unrelated town about to be attacked by a large crowd of demonic beasts which was normally thought of as suicidal. To forgive Tio, who was the object his grudge, and now he was worried about the relationship between the one who half-threatened him; Hajime and Aiko and the others. He was a noble from the Kingdom, and he was extremely eccentric, as he was aiming to become an adventurer. However, even more than that, he was a good-natured person who cares about everything.

“… A good person.”

“A good person～.”

“Umu, a good fellow.”

Will showed a complex expression towards those words said simultaneously. Although he was praised, it was an indescribably subtle evaluation for women to think of a man as “a good person.”

“P-Please stop talking about me… I only wanted to ask you for a full explanation of your reasoning…”

“… Reasoning?”

With no more than a subtle expression while he scratched his cheeks, Will continued to talk. However, Hajime’s eyebrows twitched in reaction to Will’s words.

“That’s right. About Aiko-dono, who was probably left with ill-feelings and about why the boy called Shimizu was killed… The reason for your actions.”

“…Didn’t I explain it already? He was an enemy…”

“That’s the reason you “killed” him and not the reason why you “can’t save” him, right? After all, he had already received a mortal wound at that time, and he would be dead in a few minutes if you just left him… There should be a reason as to why you purposely killed him, right?”

“… You unexpectedly observed the situation rather well.”

What Will pointed out hit the bullseye. He was a classmate, so the impact when Hajime killed him while Aiko pleaded for help was too strong. Thus, the fact that it wasn’t necessary for Hajime to kill

him was well hidden. Will, who noticed that fact, could be said to carry the “eyes” of a noble. Hajime’s tone carried admiration towards Will who wasn’t deceived.

Even Shia, who had her face out the window to enjoy the wind said, “Now that you mentioned it, I also noticed that,” and she turned to look at Hajime, who was driving, with a knowing look. Hajime hesitated a little on how to answer the question, but Yue answered them before he could say anything.

“… Hajime is a tsundere.”

“…”

“””Tsundere?”””

Maybe because Yue hit the nail on the head, Hajime kept a poker face and continued his silence. The other members could only parrot her.

“… Repaying Aiko? In other words, you were just worried about her?”

“… That’s just a coincidence.”

From how Hajime curtly answered and looked the other way, it seemed like Yue’s guess was right on the mark, so Shia and the others asked for an explanation.

Because Hajime didn’t want to answer them, Yue answered in his

stead. In short, he tried to avert Aiko's mind from feeling responsible for Shimizu's death.

Shimizu had said it before. The purpose of meeting the demonic race was to kill "Goddess of Good Harvest," Aiko. In other words, Shimizu was used to kill Aiko. Even the last attack went through Shimizu's body to kill Aiko.

Of course, Aiko wasn't responsible for Shimizu's death. Shimizu sold his soul to the demon race on his own will, which resulted in his death. Because it was the result of his own decision, Shimizu himself was responsible for it. Even if he wasn't responsible for it, it was the responsibility of the one from demon race who mortally wounded Shimizu.

However, would Aiko agree to it? After all, the last attack was aimed at Aiko. That was the reason why she felt strongly responsible. Aiko always thought of her students first. Shimizu died because she involved him. In effect, wasn't it her fault Shimizu was dead?, she might think in such a way. Thus he thought, can Aiko's mind endure it?; Hajime felt a slight fear.

Even Aiko should feel unease and fear as human who was summoned to a different world. Although she didn't lament as she cowered and trembled in fear, the reason she could work so hard was because she had her pride as a "teacher." In addition, there were "students" who occupied Aiko's mind as a "teacher."

And a student had died because of her. The impact was greater than when she had heard Hajime had died, or the time when Hajime said the cause was the backstabbing of a classmate. It would be a much stronger blade to damage Aiko's heart. It might

even break her.

Hajime calculations would be affected if Aiko was broken, but he was definitely worried about her. Hajime had felt that Aiko's words were an impossible ideal, because they gave birth to a lot of contradictions.

Even so, the words said by Aiko made him think it was definitely be necessary for Yue and Shia's future happiness. That's why even if the world had changed, and even if Hajime had changed, the "preaching" of Hajime's "teacher" made him feel indebted to her.

Therefore Hajime killed Shimizu even though he would die soon enough even if he was left alone. Making a strong impression, emphasizing that Shimizu was an "enemy". This was followed by making an impression of Hajime being the one who killed Shimizu. Aiko's heart shouldn't break down. He thought it was his duty so his "teacher" wouldn't change.

"So that's what happened… Fufu, what a tsundere Hajime-san is."

"So that's what happened…"

"Indeed~, Master is unexpectedly cute."

Yue finished her explanation to the other members, and their eyes carried warmth as they looked at Hajime, but Hajime kept looking the other way.

"… But, I think Aiko noticed it."

“…”

Hajime silently turned his gaze to Yue. Yue returned Hajime’s glance with gentle eyes.

“… Aiko is Hajime’s teacher. A person whose words remained in Hajime’s heart. That’s why there’s no way she didn’t notice…”

“… Yue.”

“… It’s okay, Aiko is strong. The situation will definitely end how Hajime desired it.”

“…”

Apparently Yue trusted Aiko because Aiko could at least have Hajime focus on himself. Something she couldn’t do. Towards Yue who watched him with an upward gaze, Hajime responded by gently narrowing his eyes. Because of Yue’s words, his worries about Aiko and future developments which clouded his mind cleared.

“Haa~, to create the world where only the two of you existed… no matter how much time passes, I will also create such atmosphere…”

“Th-This, what can I say… I somehow feel something sweet in my

mouth…”

“Muu~ this one wants thee to abuse this one, but… even this kind of situation isn’t bad…”

Will and the others felt uncomfortable because of Hajime and Yue’s sweet atmosphere. Shia in particular was puffing her cheeks and pouting in distaste.

Yue noticed Shia and shifted her gaze towards her, and once again matched Hajime’s gaze to silently appeal to him. The content was none other than “Shia’s reward.” Without Shia’s peculiar magic; “Foresight” and her desperate action, Aiko would have become someone who couldn’t return because of a hole in her head. Shia had saved Hajime’s teacher.

Because he understood, Hajime let out an “Uh,” moved his gaze away from Yue, looked at Shia and said, “… Shia. That’s, well, you saved us. Though it’s belated,… thank you.”

“… Who?”

The result of him saying his gratitude while enduring his embarrassment were those words along with astonished expression. Though veins popped on Hajime’s forehead, he endured it because it was the consequence of his deeds.

“… Well, I think it couldn’t be helped for you to take such

attitude… Even so, I am seriously expressing my gratitude, you know?”

Hajime matched his gaze with Shia, who was looking at him firmly expressing his gratitude with a “Thank you.” Because of Hajime straightforward words, Shia’s body trembled as though an electric shock ran through her whole body, and she became restless. Her gaze excitedly wandered around while her cheeks were dyed in deep red. Her rabbit ears were swaying here and there.

“Th-that’s, well, i-it’s not like I’ve done something amazing, and it’s okay if you don’t say thank— A-agh! What’s with this suddenness. Somehow, it feels really embarrassing… ehehe.”

Hajime smiled wryly while looking at Shia’s embarrassed state, and he asked of the doubts he had.

“Shia. Though I was just a little curious about it,… why did you unhesitatingly jump out at that time? You had never talked about anything important with sensei, right? I also can’t remember a timewhen you got along with her…”

“That is… because she is someone Hajime-san worried about.”

“… That’s all, huh.”

“?… Yes, I think that’s all?”

“… I see.”

Because of Shia's astonished expression, Hajime expression ascertained that he couldn't say anything more. Certainly, Aiko was Hajime's teacher. His classmates would be impacted if she was gone.

He was honestly glad she didn't die. However, he remembered he didn't show it through his speech and behavior. Nevertheless, Yue and Shia seemed to be able to read what was in Hajime's heart; they were people who always knew his heartfelt emotions. Though he only thought of it now, they had crossed the boundaries of being companions. Such understanding had crossed his mind.

Thus, even if Yue didn't say anything, he thought to repay Shia with something. And so, Hajime who was still embarrassed spoke to her.

"Shia. Is there something you want?"

"Heh? Something… I want?"

"Ah. You can say it's a thanks or a reward… Well, something like that. Of course it's only something within my ability, okay?"

Shia was a little perplexed because of the sudden words. Since she thought what she had done was a natural thing to do for companions, she thought it was a little exaggerated. "U-U~n," she groaned and when she casually saw Yue at his side.

Yue was watching Shia with a gentle expression, and then she nodded. Her gaze told her was it was okay for Shia to honestly

receive Hajime's gratitude, Yue was urging her. Shia, who accurately read the situation, let out a forced laugh. After thinking about a little, and she turned her gaze from Yue who revealed a smile while nodding towards Hajime.

"Then, please take my first—"

"Rejected"

"… Why? No matter how much I think, finally the dere time has COMEEE!!! It is that kind of time, right? Right? Please read the mood!"

"I said, 'within my ability'."

"That's quite within your ability! Even though you always casually keep me away, you did it with Yue-san! I know it happened! My heart felt empty whenever I found out about your liaison! Woo, when we arrive at Fhuren, I'll once again go on errand alone, and you will make love during that time, right? Sob Again, I alone… Killing time alone,… then I'll pretend to not see Yue-san beaming… damn it…"

"No, pl—, there's nothing to cry about… I am in love with Yue, and about you, well, I think of you as an important companion, but it's not love… For me to embrace someone else is…"

"… Sob… Hajime-san, you good for nothing!"

“… Oi.”

“A wuss! A bastard who tricks a maiden’s heart! A good for nothing! You perverted voyeur!”

The time has come!, and she was about to say her wish with joyful expression, but Shia became indignant because she was rejected even before she finished voicing request. She let out all of her dissatisfaction up until now as she curses Hajime while weeping.

From the back seat, “Pfft… The man who annihilated several tens of thousands of demonic beasts is… a good for nothing… Pfft.”

“Unexpectedly, Master has a pure heart, if thou still haven’t been in that kind of relationship… it means this one whose ass’s first time was deprived has a step in the lead…”

Those words were heard although it said in whisper. Hajime seriously thought, should I throw them out of this car?, for a moment. However, Yue who was sitting by his side was somehow looking at him with a criticizing gaze, and he let out a “Guh”.

Following that, he spoke to Shia again with cramped cramped cheeks. In addition, he swore in his heart to punish Will later. About the other voice… he would leave her as is because he didn’t want to be her companion.

“Shia. Please lower the hurdle. If it’s another thing…”

“… Hajime, you can’t?”

For some reason, Yue hugged Shia. Shia said with a miserable voice as she clung to Yue, “Yue-saa～n”.

Obviously, Yue seemed to allow Hajime to embrace Shia. Recently, Yue has been truly spoiling Shia. Hajime had thought it was because of a deep friendship, but somehow it became similar to a big sister helping her troubled little sister. Moreover, the elder one was a sis-con.

His beloved woman was asking him to embrace another woman. Seriously, Hajime who didn’t know what this situation meant could only hold his head with both hands. However, Hajime also had something he wanted to say.

“… I, what my heart wants is Yue, only you. I don’t hate Shia, I think of her as an important companion, but… I can’t treat her the same as Yue. You know, I carry the desire to monopolize Yue. No matter what reason it is, I won’t allow her to be beside another man. You can think of it as being a narrow-minded or selfish, but… I want Yue to think the same as me, it’s something I desire. That’s why, even if it was Shia, could you pardon me from starting a relation with another woman?”

“… Hajime.”

With Shia clinging to her arm, Yue’s cheeks blushed and she looked straight at Hajime with moistened eyes. Hajime once again gently stroke Yue’s cheek with his hand as he returned her gaze, and the

two formed a sweet atmosphere anew. Even the air's color seemed to have turned pink.

The two watched each other faces as they gradually drew closer, then…

"… It seems I… have been completely forgotten… even though it was the talk about my reward…"

Shia was scowling with a dangerous tone as she stared at Hajime and Yue who almost reached the climax. Then the two finally noticed their surroundings and hurriedly distanced themselves. Yue, who still felt embarrassed, was timidly twirling her beautiful hair to calm down.

Hajime, who confessed his feelings, had his heart thrown out of order because of the surprise attack. His expressionlessness crumbled, and his mouth naturally stammered for an excuse. The words of him wanting to monopolize her and to be monopolized, were heavy responsibility for a person, but Yue was extremely happy. Her heart shivered and she inadvertently forgot about everything except Hajime.

"… I see, I somehow understand the relationship between the three of you… Shia-dono has it hard."

"Annoyed… The bond with Yue is deep… though that'll be a hindrance to this one… Well, as long as this one will be abused, then it's…"

Will's expression looked as if he would vomit sugars as he tried to guess the relationship between the three. They didn't want to know of the existence of the pervert who started panting as she imagined something.

"… Hajime, I am sorry. But, Shia is also important… I want to repay her. So, please go out with her for a day inside the town… Can you?"

"Yue-saa~n."

Now, Yue was asking Hajime for Shia's sake. Shia, whose heart was broken had her head patted, and was now spoiledly pressing and rubbing her face against Yue. Hajime who saw their appearance answered with a wry smile.

"That's okay, I don't mind if it's just that much. It's not because Yue asked for Shia, okay? Even if Shia was the one who asked for it, I'll at least go out with her."

"Hajime-san… no, there's no need to be concerned about it, it's okay as long as it can become an established fact!"

"… Seriously, you are…"

"Well, because that's still impossible, I'll endure it for now by

increasing the favorability through the date. Once we arrive at Fhuren, please take me to the Sightseeing Ward, okay?"

"Ah, ah, okay."

Because of that idea, Hajime thought to once again remind her that Yue was the only special one for him. However, Shia probably already knew, but she didn't get discouraged. With a complex expression, Hajime thought, Well, it's okay to let Shia do what she wants, as he acknowledged their date. There was no change to the fact that Shia was already an important existence for Hajime, and he could not be reluctant about it because it was something Yue asked of him. Thus, he confirmed he wanted to reward her for her hard work.

"What's with this feeling of being an outsider. It's the same feeling of slipping into another family's get-together."

"Hmm. This kind of 'Ignoring play' doesn't make this one feel happy at all… Only lonely… Rather, isn't it about the time someone responds to this one? Is it really okay for this one to be here?"

Will, who was sitting behind the front seat where the flirting and heartwarming scene had occurred, looked so uncomfortable. In addition, although no one talked to her, Tio whom participated in the previous conversation, unbeknownst to them, had boarded the carrier as she placed her head on the window where the carrier was connected to the vehicle.

Before the fight, she had asked permission to follow Hajime. In the end, she was left behind because her existence was forgotten, so she jumped into the carrier of the magic-driven four-wheeler in a panic. The look of her panting because of her cruel treatment, while peeping into the vehicle via the window, took everyone inside the vehicle aback, and decided to treat it as though there was nothing there.

At first, he tried to shake her off by doing reckless movements with a wild-like speed just like the one in the movies, but she used magic to her advantage to stick to them. Moreover, because she became more and more excited with ecstasy, they decided to just ignore her. The pervert: the more one reacts to her, the more pleased she became.

Because of the situation where no one responded to her, Tio was excited because she thought of it as some kind of play to ignore her. However, she began to feel the emptiness from the interaction of Hajime and the others, and finally complained to them. Even so no one respond to her, so Tio creeped into the vehicle from the window connecting the vehicle and the carrier. With her black and long hair hanging down, her appearance who slowly creeping inside was just like Sada**-san from a certain movie called ‘The Ring’.

As expected, Will couldn’t ignore the eeriness as he shouted, “Uwah!,” and retreated to the side window. Reacting to his voice, Hajime and his party looked at the back seat.

“Ah? Ahh~, th-this one is stuck. The breasts have become hindrances… Can’t get in. Sorry, Will-boy, but can thou pull this one in?”

Her breasts, which were far bigger than Shia's, were resisting the pull as they continued to change shapes because of the window frame. Tio asked, "Please pull this one, okay?," as she stretched her hands towards Will. Hajime, who saw the situation, silently pulled Schlag from his left holster. His hand moved over his shoulder and shot without any hesitation.

DOPANh!

"HMMmm!?"

The gunshot and the projectile flew outside, hitting the Tio's forehead, and the force of impact blew her back into the carrier. A clamoring and slamming sound resounded from the carrier.

"Wh-What have thou done. To suddenly do that… wouldn't it make this one excited?"

With flushed cheeks, she rubbed her forehead with a somewhat happy expression. She complained… not. Tio, from the Ryuujin tribe, said no more than a perverted remark. Maybe because she wanted to enter with her legs first, she thrusted them into the vehicle window. However, this time, her plump butt was stuck on the window frame, and her fascinating buttock somehow managed to get inside after some struggling.

Hajime silently fired Schlag in succession. And although he wanted to blow Tio's ass out of the vehicle, she was considerably stuck and

thus didn't blown away thanks to the plump meat of her buttocks cushioning the impact. However, because she let out R18 moaning every time a bullet shot was into her butt such as "Ah, an!", "How intense!", or "Masterr~". With cramped cheeks, Hajime reluctantly stopped shooting. As expected, it was better to not become an acquainted to a pervert.

Yue, who idolized the Ryuujin race, felt that the image she had of them was nothing but a fantasy, and had pushed them to the back of her head, and was now covering her eyes in shock.

Tio who guessed the gunfire had stopped, somehow held her butt and breasts, letting out a sigh "Fuu~," as she finally got inside the vehicle.

"Haa, haa, geez… how indiscriminating. A Master who can't be helped. But don't worry, this one will receive any kind of love. That's why… it's okay to do more of it, you know? Even more intense is okay, too, you know?"

"Shut up, pervert. Don't lean forward and do not come here. If possible, open the door and jump outside now."

"Kh!? Haa haa… for Master to know what's best for this one… but, this one refuses. This one has already decided to follow Master. There's also the duty as Ryuujin race, and the thing about taking responsibility, there's no reason to separate. No matter what Master will say, this one will follow thee. This one definitely won't go away."

Tio who finally entered the vehicle spewed perverted words one after another, and when Hajime coldly answered her, Tio's expression looked like she was further charmed by him. However, she firmly insisted to remain. Though it was spoiled by her own expression.

"Stop joking. What responsibility. It's nothing but the continuation of a fight to the death. Just be glad you weren't killed. Besides, your duty as Ryuujin race is about that Hero. The guy is the center of this summoning, so go to him."

"Don't want to. Definitely don't want to. Though this one doesn't know what kind of person that Hero is, this one thinks he wouldn't be able to ruthlessly and mercilessly punish this one just like Master! Beside, don't belittle this one! This one has decided whom this one would call "Master." This one not so frivolous to be able to change the feelings towards this one's master."

With her eyes fully open, Tio insisted while clenching her fists. Though it was said in a good manner, she eventually made a perverted declaration that she was happy to be treated mercilessly by Hajime.

"This one would chase thee even if thou art runs away, okay? When this one goes all over towns with the story about this one's first being snatched away. About this one's body that could no longer live without Master, doing different this and that kinds of things, it will be told along with Master's description as this one walks, okay?"

"… You are～"

With veins popped, Hajime dangerously narrowed his eyes as he thought of her as a seriously annoying fellow. Though he thought to just kill her, she wasn't an enemy and Yue would stop him, so he thought to just keep hitting her until she lost her memory. Nevertheless, she had an authentic sturdiness, and it got nowhere because she would just feel happy rather than being blown away along with her memory.

As the result, he could do nothing but glare at her with a disgusted expression from the bottom of his heart. However, his gaze only made Tio's body convulsed even more. Her condition was already irrecoverable.

"Please don't make such disgusted face, Master. This one will surely be useful. Though Master's party are outside of the norm, didn't this one has shown the proof during that fight? Even if this one doesn't know Master's objective, please let this one accompany Master. Please, Master."

"That's physiologically impossible."

"Ah!!!? Haa, Haa… Nnh! nnh!"

Towards Hajime's words that completely stopped the flow of conversation, Tio was embracing herself with both arms as though she was enduring something while she was fidgeting. Seeing Tio in such a manner, not only Hajime but everyone inside the vehicle displayed disgusted faces. After a while, Hajime let out a deep sigh and his expression looked somewhat exhausted.

“… Although I want to say something, but it’ll be useless no matter what I say, right? Just do whatever you want as long as you don’t become a hindrance to us. I have no more energy to think about what to do with you…”

“Oh? Oo~, that’s so, that’s so! Hmm, then please take care of this one from now on, Master, Yue, and Shia. Just call this one Tio! Fufufu, it looks like it’ll be a fun journey…”

“… Argh.”

“P-Please take care of me too…”

Hajime sighed again when he looked at a happy Tio with his narrowed eyes. Yue groaned in dissatisfaction, and the perplexed Shia returned her greeting.

A new companion. A pervert from Ryuujin race; Tio, had joined them. And the party advances towards Neutral Commercial City of Fhuren.

Arifureta: Volume 7 Chapter 5

Chapter 65 of the Web Novel.

Aiko Gone Mad

Three days had passed since Hajime and his party left Ul.

Although there were vexing problems; such as how to dispose of the corpses of the demonic beasts, and how to repair the roughened ground, the townspeople were unhurt. A result that could only be considered nothing but a miracle. The good news was immediately spread to the people who took shelter, peripheral towns, and even the Imperial Capital. The returning townspeople met their lovers and families. Some were hugging their close friends, and the joy of their safeties wrapped Ul in a festival-like clamor.

The protective wall Hajime left behind was surrounded the town as is, and the people who were talking about the details of the fight were gesturing how it exceed the common sense similar to how storytellers talked about a myth as they looked at the roughened ground outside of the protective wall.

The people who took shelter, especially the children, had sparkling eyes when they heard the story. Without losing this opportunity, the merchants were already calculating on how to make money by turning Hajime's protective wall into the town's new specialty.

Thus, the townspeople who didn't know anything about Hajime and Aiko believed Hajime and his party were dispatched by the "Goddess of Good Harvest," and Hajime's wall was named

“Goddess’s Shield” to honor it. Furthermore, the white-haired, eye-patched boy; Hajime, was called “Goddess’s Sword” and “Goddess’s Knight” in respect. However, it was a different story when David and the other Knights, or rather the real bodyguard Knights, recalled what was said about Aiko and Hajime. They would rampage while shouting, “As expected, I hate that guy!!!” In the future, Hajime would writhe in agony whenever he hears his name, but that’s another story.

It was somewhat a miscalculation that resulted in earning himself some embarrassing nicknames, but just as Hajime thought, Aiko’s fame and popularity were through the roof. When she walked into town, all the people would turn around and focus their gazes on her. Among them, there were also some who began to worship her while saying things such as “Bless us~.” In this town Aiko, who saved the people, was certainly seen as nothing less than a “Goddess.” The rumor had also already spread to the surrounding towns. At the very least, it might be correct to say that Aiko’s words carried more weight than the Church of Saints’ bishop, in the town of Ul.

The rumored Aiko was… safely supporting the town leaders in the town’s reconstruction, but although she acted cheerful around people close to her, her mind wasn’t there. The cause was the various impacts of the shocking truths Hajime had revealed before the fight. But above all, it was how Hajime killed Shimizu. The scene of that moment consumed her mind and gnawed at her heart.

Even today, after they finished their day duty and it was time for dinner, the students and bodyguard Knights were dining at “Water Fairy Inn,” Aiko just mechanically carried the food into her mouth and blankly looked some place else without registering the conversation of the others in her mind, only answering with the same reply.

“Ai-chan sensei… Ai-chan sensei’s magic is amazing after all! Even those roughened ground recovered quickly… Looks like it’ll return to normal in just a week!”

“… I see… that’s good.”

Sonobe Yuka, who noticed Aiko’s mind was somewhere else, intentionally talked to her cheerfully. She tried to somehow encourage Aiko, since she knew the source of her abnormal state. However, even Sonobe’s cheerful words only received an indifferent answer in return, like pre-typed-like words. Sonobe drooped her shoulders as she said “Still won’t do, huh～.”

“Aiko… did the mayor or the bishop said anything today? If you’re really troubled by it, I won’t forgive them for troubling Aiko, even if it’s the bishop. I am Aiko’s Knight after all. No matter when, only I will be Aiko’s ally.”

“… I see… that’s good.”

It was unknown whether David said those words to encourage Aiko or to seduce her. The remark on how he was willing to go up against the bishop was considerably dangerous as a Templar Knight, although it might not be important to David; the warrior of love. The “I” part was emphasized. In regards to going against anyone… it was also considered by the surrounding Knights, as they agreed with him while they directed sharp glares at their commander who casually made his advance.

However David's casual appeal was easily tossed aside like the words coming from a certain long running TV program during daytime. It was doubtful as to whether or not she heard him. The expression on the student's faces were saying "Serves you right~" to David who drooped his shoulders. The same expression was on the other Knights' faces.

Without taking any notice of the students and the Knights, Aiko indifferently continued to eat without responding.

(…If, if only I had talked to Shimizu-kun more… If only I had noticed his feelings earlier… If I did, then something like that wouldn't have happened… If, if he relied on his classmates… If, if I didn't get taken as a hostage… If only… I died… then he wouldn't have found it necessary to kill Shimizu-kun…

Why did he kill him… Even though they were classmates… Was it simply because he was an enemy?… Could killing someone be so simple because of such a reason? Was it so simple to kill a person?… How could it be done so naturally?…

That's strange… Humans aren't demonic beasts. To be able to kill without any hesitation… He,… was he someone who could easily kill a human?… If I left him alone, would he have been a danger to the other children?… Will the other children be safe since he's gone?… As long as he's not… Kh?!? What did I just think of!?… Stop. It's not good to think about this any further!)

Presently, regret and self-condemnation repeated themselves in Aiko's mind… Thus, if she thought of it unconsciously, the buds of fear and grudges towards Hajime would appear, she would deny them in a panic, and she would once again return to her first

thoughts, repeating the process. There was too much she wanted to think about, and there were also a lot things she didn't want to think of. Aiko's mind was similar to a library where the bookshelves had crumbled and unorganized information were scattered around in a chaotic manner.

Suddenly, a calm and warmth voice reached Aiko. "Aiko-sama. About today's dish, is it not up to your taste?"

"Eh?"

It was Foss Selo, the owner of "Water Fairy Inn." His voice was far from loud, it was actually said in a rather small voice. However, there was no one inside the inn who missed Foss's words. His calm and deep voice would reach anyone without fail. Even now, Aiko whose mind was caught in whirpool of thought easily heard his words, and it made her senses return to reality.

When she noticed she had cried out in a rather strange and loud voice, Aiko's cheeks flushed slightly as she turned towards the smiling Foss.

"U-Umm, what was it? I'm sorry, I was daydreaming for a moment."

"No, no, don't worry about it. I just thought the dish was not to your taste because you didn't raise your face. If so, I thought of sending out another dish…"

“N-No need! The food is really delicious. I was just thinking about something…”

Although Aiko said the food was very delicious, she herself couldn’t remember what it tasted like. When she looked at her surroundings, her students and the Knights were looking at her with a somewhat anxious expression. She noticed what was on their minds, and she thought she mustn’t continue the way she has been acting as she pulled herself together and continued on with her meal. However, she coughed in a panic when food entered her lungs.

Because Aiko was coughing with teary eyes, the students and the Knights were panicked. Seeing the situation, Foss casually prepared napkin and water.

“I-I am sorry. To trouble yo-…”

“It is not a trouble at all.”

Although Foss saw Aiko’s blunder, he kept a calm smile which made Aiko feel grateful and relieved. Seeing Aiko’s current state, Foss narrowed his eyes and thought of something. He spoke with a small and still calm voice.

“Umm. Aiko-sama. Though it might be presumptuous, may I ask one thing?”

“Eh? Ah, yes. What is it?”

“Why can’t Aiko-sama believe what you want to believe?”

“Heh?”

Unable to understand Foss’s words, Aiko tilted her head as a question mark floated above her head. Because of that, Foss continued with a wry smile, “Looks like those words were too lacking.”

“Apparently, Aiko-sama’s mind is currently in serious confusion. There are too many things you want to think about, there are also things you don’t want to think of, and you don’t know what should you do. What’s best is to do what you want, even if you’re not sure of what you want yet. There are many things you don’t understand, which only increases your impatience, and become the impetus towards the vicious circle of confusion. Am I wrong?”

“H-How…”

Because he had correctly guessed what she was thinking of, Aiko instantly became speechless. Seeing her reaction, Foss calmly explained with a smile, “I’ve seen a lot of guests, after all.”

“During such times, it’s better to just ‘believe in what you want to believe in’ for now. But then again, people will overlook things if they only want to believe what they want, those words also came with such warning. That saying is correct. However, in my opinion, people only act in what they believe in. That’s why, I feel that

during times when one ‘can’t move on,’ it isn’t a bad thing to ‘believe in what you want to believe in’.”

“… To believe in what I want to believe in.”

Aiko contemplated in Foss’s words. Aiko’s mind was currently filled with regret and guilt which became a bud of doubt in Hajime as the hatred swirled around. Hajime was certainly Aiko’s important student, but Shimizu who was also a similarly an important student to her was murdered. The moment she understood he was an existence who, according to situation, would deprive the other students of their lives. She recognized Hajime as a threat who would deprive her of her important people. Even so, Hajime was also her student, she couldn’t simply cast him away. It was the same reason why she couldn’t just abandon Shimizu, who tried to commit mass murder. That’s why she was confused since because didn’t know what to do. Though Aiko herself thought she had a difficult personality, she couldn’t help it. Hatayama Aiko was a ‘teacher,’ after all.

Foss didn’t know what happened to Aiko. He didn’t know she was, in a certain sense, believing too much in what she wanted to believe in. Even so, he could see she had committed a large blunder since she couldn’t move on after what she believed in had collapsed.

While he was lost in thought, Aiko’s hands had stopped from partaking of her meal and began to get absorbed in her thoughts.

(To believe in what I want to believe in. I wonder… what is it that I want to believe in? One of the things is that I want all of the students to return to Japan. However, it’s something that can no

longer be fulfilled. Now what I want to believe in is for it to be possible to return home without any more losses…

His story. His story where a classmate tried to kill him. I do not want to believe it… he even said he will kill us if we were to become a hindrance to him. Towards a human who unhesitatingly murdered a person… Towards the enemy who threatened the students…

Even so, I do not want to believe it. Nevertheless, he actually killed him… killed Shimizu-kun without any hint of hesitation. That's why he's already… no, I must believe in what I want to believe in.)

Aiko closed her eyes as she tried to hold down the resurfaced dark feelings. The surrounding people were anxiously looking at her as she moved slightly while thinking of something.

('Because he's an enemy' is what he said, and 'I have no time for that'. He also feared Shimizu-kun will once again attack him and his important people if he let him live. That was something anyone would have thought of.

In reality, Yue-san and Shia-san wouldn't put so much trust in him if he was a cruel man. He only wanted to cut off the source of anxiety for the future of those children… It was why he couldn't let him live. In other words, he thought I wouldn't be able to do anything about Shimizu-kun…

To let Shimizu-kun live would mean I should have at least showed him I could reform Shimizu-kun, in which I didn't… In the end, I

was powerless… Shimizu-kun was… Even so, to be killed in that manner… It meant Shimizu-kun was already weakene—… Kh.)

There was a clear reason why Hajime shot Shimizu dead. He was not a broken human who would think nothing of murder. He was not a monster who couldn't be understood. He wasn't an enemy who blindly harm the students. Aiko decided to believe in him because he was a 'student', and her words could still reach him. With such thinking process, she recalled the shocking scene where a student shot another student to death, and she tried to search for the reason behind it.

(That's right. I had forgotten it until now. To begin with, I was the one who asked him to help the dying Shimizu-kun, and that was the result. Shimizu-kun would have died even if he didn't do anything. It was completely unnecessary for him to purposely shoot him! So why?! Why did he do that?! To make sure he dies? No, there's no need for him to do such a thing. That child only had a few minutes left to live, it was why I asked him for his help, but there's nothing more left to be done. After all, there was nothing I could do… Shimizu-kun was shot because of me— Kh!?)

Aiko opened her eyes widel She was aghast by the truth she had just noticed.

(… That's right. Shimizu-kun received the wound from the attack aimed at me. If nothing was done during that time, I would have surely died. It was my fault he had to die! But everyone was convinced Shimizu-kun was killed by him! He was the one who convinced us of it!)

It was her fault, it was her who killed her own student. Just like

Hajime feared, Aiko finally realized the truth and paled in an instant. The existence of her students were Aiko's supporting pillars. The fact that she was the cause of one of her student's death broke Aiko's mind. The impact of the fact made her mind unintentionally turn on its defensive mechanism, and Aiko's mind blanked out. With her outlook wrapped in darkness, she thought of giving herself to the darkness. However, the words Hajime left behind revived her mind.

"If possible, please don't get demoralized."

At that time, her mind didn't understand it because of consecutive impacts. Even though it was troublesome to think well of the meaning behind those words, they were simple words if she thought hard enough.

(If, if he said those words because he had predicted my situation… Wasn't he worrying about me?… I, he noticed I would break down because I realized I was the cause of Shimizu-kun's death. That was the reason why… he unnecessarily shot him… to convince us it was he who killed him… so I wouldn't be crushed by guilt… to keep being a teacher…)

Aiko understood Hajime's sense of values. Therefore, she didn't think it was done entirely for her sake. Even so, there's no denying Hajime had rushed into action because he thought of Aiko. The closing of the door in Aiko's mind was immediately stopped right before it completely shut, and it began to slowly open once again. Her narrowed view once again broadened. Though there was still the cold feeling like one of the coldest season inside her mind, but at the same time, there certainly was a small fire present.

(Looks like I was being protected by him… No, not only him, but a lot of people have protected me. The children by my side are protecting me even now. I only thought of protecting him, but I didn't realize I was also being protected… How immature of me. That's now's not the right time for me to keep trying to be independent…)

Aiko wore a resolute expression. However, her thoughts involving Shimizu-kun and the fact that she was the reason he was killed wouldn't disappear for the rest of her life. Even so, she couldn't just stand still because there were students who adored and relied on her as their teacher; she didn't want to. Aiko renewed her vow to do the things she could do as a 'teacher', even if the world had changed. In addition, she also engraved in her mind to not let her current ideals be shaken. There is already, without a doubt, fear or grudge against Hajime.

(He's a clumsy one… He understood I might hold a grudge against him, or I might even become his enemy… Now that I think about it, he received my words and it looked like he thought it over seriously… Could this possibly be his way of returning a favor?

When I think back, I've only been saved by him. He told me the truth, and in the end, he even saved this town. Moreover, during the battle, he fulfilled his promise and brought Shimizu-kun back. If I reconsidered those things, I've only been unreasonable. I only talked of my ideals… and I've pressured him with that… How truly immature of me. Even so, he saved us… even though his way of thinking is cold… Looks like parts of his previous self still remained… No, at the very least, he regained some of them, right? Could it be because of those girls?)

Once again, Aiko smiled wryly as she thought of becoming

indebted to him. Even though her immaturity was shameful as teacher, she smiled as remembered the Hajime who had sluggish status in the beginning, transforming into a truly dependable man. Thus, even though Hajime had completely changed, she felt happy when she caught a glimpse of his previous self.

But at the moment, she guessed the reasons were Yue and Shia, the girls who were always close to Hajime's side. Aiko somehow felt a pain in her heart. Aiko inclined her neck, but she immediately thought of it as nothing but her imagination.

(Incidentally, I still haven't said my thanks to Shia-san who protected me. Even though she is someone I owe my life to… Next time, I must properly make sure to thank her… In addition, I also owe my life to him…)

About the poison and the raging development, Aiko reflected. She had not thanked Shia, and the other benefactor of her life, Hajime. It was only now that she recalled something sealed in the corner of her memory, and she blushed as though fire came out of her face.

(Th-That's just an artificial respiration! A lifesaving measure! There's absolutely nothing more than that! I-It's not like such an intense thing was my first time. I never thought of it as pleasant! Yup, I absolutely never thought of it like that!)

When she thought of the reason behind her flushed face, Aiko suddenly began to beat the table. She repeated her excuse to no one in particular.

In addition, even though Aiko was an adult, she didn't have any experience in love. Even so, it was true that with her lovely looks, speech, and behavior changed, becoming like someone who was seriously in love. After all, in Japan, there were only 'gentlemen,' who treated her seriously because of her teenage-like appearance. Aiko knew there were a lot of men who thought of her appearance as good, but most of them ended up as good friends because none of them wanted to experience shame in being labeled as something beginning with 'Lo'.

Since it was not unusual for people in their earlier teens to marry in this world, no one was bothered by Aiko's short height and childish face; the so-called a little girl's appearance. So even though David and the other Knights were serious,… her small experience in love and her small stature made her believe no man would be interested in her, since she didn't even notice the love call clearly sent by men from this different world.

Thus, the mouth to mouth life-saving measure Hajime had quite the impact on Aiko. She calmed her mind, and once again recalled the things that wouldn't get out of her head.

(… To begin with, he already has girlfriends named Yue and Shia… There were already two, so it doesn't matter if it increases by one. Just what I am saying?! I am a teacher! He's a student! Wait, that's not the problem! It's not like he thinks of me like that! Besides, he somehow managed to casually two-time! Illicit sexual relationships are forbidden! That's insincere! Love should only be one way!… To have two at the same time… Kh, how shameless! I won't allow such immoral relationships! Hmph, I won't allow it!)

The sound of her beating the table became louder.

(… But his feelings towards Yue-san is quite special. Though her style isn't so different from me… Could it be that h-he likes child-like women? F-For example, like me? No, no, no, what am I thinking! So what if I know his tastes! To begin with, he is eight years younger… Now that I think about it, aren't people from the Vampire race like Yue-san have a long lifespan? In other words, he likes child-like older woman? Wait, so what if I knew that! Return to your senses, Hatayama Aiko! You are a teacher! He is a student! You are disqualified as a teacher if a little kiss makes you confused!)

Maybe because she was done beating the table, she held her face with both hands, began shaking her head while saying 'No, no', once again she beat the table, continued with another 'No, no', and finally she shouted "I am a teacher—!!," as she began to pound the table with her forehead.

As expected, even the students and bodyguard Knights; the group who loves Aiko, was taken aback by her eccentric behavior. When Foss noticed Aiko, who started a one-man show, he said, "Oh my, looks like you've cheered up," with his unchanging calm smile. What a big person.

Afterwards, Aiko was able to come to terms with her feelings towards Hajime about this and that, and self-concluded that was only a temporary hesitation caused by unstable emotion. Thus, there's no change, Hajime was her student. While it was necessary to deliver information about Hajime to the top management in Church of the Saint and the Kingdom, she also needed to be prepared to protect Hajime from them in case of emergency, since she was determined to return to the Kingdom.

Aiko didn't notice it. The thing about Hajime wasn't concluded, it was just put on hold. While she called the students in her mind as "that child," only Hajime was called "he."

Thus the feeling began to bud. The time when Aiko finally took notice of it would be a little bit more in the future…

Arifureta: Volume 7 Chapter 6

Chapter 66 of the Web Novel.

Once Again in Fhuren

There was no change in liveliness of Neutral Commercial City, Fhuren.

From the other side of the tall and gigantic wall, the town's clamor reached considerable distance, all the way to outskirts. There was also no change with the long lines on the gates. From tourists to merchants who were visiting because of business, and there were also all kinds of listless people because of the torment of waiting for their turns.

There was a man who gave off a gaudy feeling standing at the end of the line of people by the entrance where the inspection was taking place. He was accompanied by two flashy women, one on each side, who were also listless as they waited for their turn in dissatisfaction while sweating. For the time being, would it be better to ask them what happened or just watch them? — they gave off such a mood. Then, they talked about silly things such as how to improve their waiting condition to reach their turn faster when suddenly; the gaudy man heard an unfamiliar sound to his ears.

SCREECH!!!

In the beginning, the gaudy man ignored it as he tried to lift the mood of the two women by his side. However, when the merchants and two women beside him became pop-eyed while looking behind him, coupled by the sound getting gradually louder, he turned towards the highway and said, “What!”

Thus he also became pop-eyed as he saw the scene of a black box running on the highway as it created raging storm of dust. The people quickly raised a ruckus. Though there were those who tried to run away as they shouted ‘Demonic beast!’, the speed of the box-like object was more than they could imagine, and it immediately reached them before they noticed it.

The gaudy man stiffened. The people in the line thought: It is hopeless already!, with despair reflecting in their eyes.

At the time, when it almost collided into them, the box-like object, creak, creak, creak, half rotating as its rear part shook, and it immediately stopped while raising a dust storm.

People were staring at the stationary object, the magic-driven four-wheeler. Within the confusion of what had happened, the four-wheeler’s doors opened. The ones who got off while ignoring and not thinking anything of the surprised people, were of course Hajime and his party. Yue, Shia, and even Tio were ignoring the gazes of the people. Only Will was saying, Sorry for the commotion!, as he bowed.

However, the people couldn’t even hear Will’s apology. It could be said they didn’t even care about the fact that people were coming out from the never before seen object. Their eyes were glued to the beautiful girls and a woman who “U~n”, stretched before them.

When Yue, Shia, and Tio moved, “Hou,” sighs of admiration of the people entranced by them could be heard.

Hajime was sitting on the four-wheeler’s bonnet and said, The distance from here to the entrance, it looks like we need to wait for around an hour, huh~, as he narrowed his eyes. His muscle had stiffened because of the long time spent inside the car, so he went outside in a carefree way when they reached the gate. Because magic-driven four-wheeler was mobile with the use of Hajime’s direct magic manipulation, it was possible to move it without sitting on the driver seat, though the control difficulty was higher.

Hajime released the stiffness in his shoulders as his neck made cracking sounds. Yue got on the bonnet just like Hajime, went behind him, and began to rub his shoulders. Apparently she wanted to massage him. Hajime relaxed his body while smiling.

Maybe because Shia became lonely, she also sat down and drew closer to Hajime’s side. When Tio saw them, she said, “Muh, this one will also participate!,” as she emphasized her huge breasts and tried to cling onto Hajime’s arm but… she was slapped by Hajime and she fell down. However, there should be no problem as she displayed a very happy expression under Hajime’s feet.

“Hajime-san. Is it really okay to drive the four-wheeler until here? At the very least, I think we should hide it…”

“Nn? Honestly, isn’t it already too late? We have already rampaged so flashily. In a week, it will spread to even remote regions. Besides, I already had a thought that such a day would eventually come… It’s just earlier than what I had predicted.”

“… Nn, there is no more need for such prudence.”

Hajime answered Shia’s question as he shrugged his shoulders. Even though he planned to put a little effort, so that it will allow them to avoid any trouble, the battle in the Ul town should be spread quickly. So whatever his plan was, it should be useless now. That’s why, it was just as Yue had said, he stopped trying to not display his artifacts as much as possible, and decided to no more going about with such cautiousness.

“U~n, so that’s it. Well, because there will surely be actions by the Church and the Kingdom, it certainly is too late, huh. Though it’ll be better if we can get support from Aiko-san or Ilwa-san…”

“Well, in the end, those are just insurances. It is at the degree where it will be good if they demonstrate a good effect. To begin with, I have resolved myself to fight anything that might show up no matter what they are. Regardless what happens, I will just mow them down and move forward. That’s why it’s okay for you, Shia, to no longer act as a slave, you know? Do you want me to remove that collar?”

He thought the troublesome preparations made against the Church and the Kingdom related to Ilwa and Aiko would be something good if they would take effect in the end. Hajime didn’t think much about it. As the topic quickly came to a close, he said it was okay for Shia to stop acting as a slave while poking her collar. Outstretching his hand, he implicitly said it was no longer necessary to hold back to avoid troublesome things.

However Shia who quietly stroked and touched the collar, shook her head to refuse with somewhat blushing cheeks.

“No, it is okay to stay as is. After all, it was the first thing I got from Hajime-san… Besides, it is the proof I am Hajime-san’s… and I recently took a liking to it… That’s why, it is okay to stay as is.”

Shia said such things. Her rabbit ears moved about from embarrassment. Her appearance of when she was looking down, coupled with her being shy was truly cute. The men in the edge of Hajime’s view were pressing their nose as to suppress the dripping blood.

While Shia was still looking down, Hajime held her chin and made her look up. Because of his actions, Shia’s face became a deeper shade of red. That followed by the ground under the men’s feet also being dyed in red. Hajime took out a crystal with a beautiful hue from the “Treasure Box,” and placed it on Shia’s collar. To be more precise he used “transmutation” on the crystal.

Shia’s collar was to display that she was Hajime’s slave so it was of a boorish fashion. The telepathy stone and the other stones were installed without regards to any design as it was made in unostentatious manner. To begin with, it was made as temporary thing to not attract any trouble inside the town, so he disregarded the design.

However, if Shia liked it and wanted to keep wearing it, just a little, it could be said it was too boorish. Also, compared to the time he gave her the collar, Hajime’s feelings towards Shia had become gentler. That’s why Hajime thought to make the collar to suit Shia.

As the result, white and blue ornaments were geometrically installed on the black material and, the fragment of God's Crystal was processed into a small cross that radiated blue light, installed on the front side which resulted in a mysterious-like collar… A choker even more fashionable than the ones sold on earth. There's already no impression left of a dog collar used to restrain.

Hajime showed a satisfied expression towards his workmanship. Shia, who was entranced because of the feeling from Hajime's fingers that sometimes brushed her neck, was startled when Hajime passed a mirror to her. Following that, she readily confirmed the choker on her neck with the mirror. There was certainly a choker with mysteriously beautiful ornaments. The cross made out of God Crystal was indeed beautiful and suited Shia's eyes.

Shia was poking the cross with her finger and her mouth loosened in a wide smile. Afterwards, she embraced Hajime's arm as a truly happy smile floated across her face while rubbing her forehead on his arm, and continued with her thanks. Incidentally, her rabbit ears were also nestled on Hajime.

While Shia on his shoulder raised an expression of happiness, Yue on his back smiled slightly and stroked Shia's rabbit ears nestled on him. Tio who crept up once again received a slap.

Because of the pink-colored space that appeared out of nowhere, the people who returned from the impact of the unknown object and the appearances of the super beautiful girls, women began to pay attention to Hajime and his party with various feelings. The majority of the women didn't even envy Yue and the others' beauty as they let out warm sighs. On the other side, the men divided into

those captivated by Yue and the others, those looking at Hajime with envy and killing intent, and those who licked their lips as they found out the commodity value on Hajime's artifacts and the girls.

However, no one faced Hajime and his party directly even now. The merchants seemed to restrain each other as they looked for a right timing to speak. Amongst them, was the gaudy man from earlier; he displayed a mortified expression as he compared the two women beside him with Yue and the others, and clicked his tongue. Thus he recklessly approached Hajime and his party.

"Yo, ladies. If it's okay, can— "

"Who do you think you are trying to touch without permission? Huh?"

"Hii!"

The gaudy man casually called out to Yue and the others while ignoring Hajime. If it was only calling them, Hajime's "pressure" wouldn't end up guiding him to fainting course. But, of all things, the gaudy man was trying to touch Shia's cheek.

Just from one look, the gaudy man was quite a good looking one. Therefore, he must have thought any women would fall for him if he touched and seduced them. However, Shia's gaze was cold and though she thought to deal with him before he touched her, Hajime's arm grabbed the gaudy man's head ahead of her. Moreover it was coupled with a thick killing intent.

The gaudy man immediately ducked his body and leaked a miserable scream. Hajime just ignored the gaudy man's appearance and threw him off towards the highway. The gaudy man reached the ground in tremendous speed 30 meters away. With his face shaving the ground, he ended up in a pose just like Nagoya's Shachihoko. And after advancing for ten meters more with only his head, he fell and was completely unmoving.

Within cloud of sand, the gaudy man laid on the earth without even twitching. The people who saw were dumbfounded because they just saw a person flew in an impossible orbit, and they turned their gazes to Hajime who created the spectacle. The two women who attended the gaudy man were timidly looking at Hajime, who glared at the surrounding with absolute zero eyes which made them shudder, and they disappeared somewhere while screaming.

The merchants who tried to restrain each other while saying, "You guys, I won't let you go ahead," from a while ago were now saying, "Please go ahead," as they mutually compromised with each other. Hajime said clearly, Who's next?, while glaring.

Because no one came forward, Hajime smiled in satisfaction, and he looked away from the surrounding people as he lost interest.

"Whoa, Hajime-san was angry for me~ Is this how he expresses his desire to monopolize me? Just one more step until that thing happens, right!"

"… Shia, do your best."

“Yue-saa~n. Okay. I will work hard~!”

“Hmph, it is of no matter how much thou art is valued~ Master. Isn’t it okay to value this one, too? Please throw this one just like that man, please?”

Because Hajime was angry towards the one who tried to touch her, happiness spread through Shia’s whole body. Actually, Hajime just couldn’t forgive him for trying to touch Shia as though she was his thing. There was no desire to monopolize her, but it was too late to correct her, though it was true that his action was because he thought Shia as someone important to him.

Incidentally, because Tio who looked at the blown away gaudy man with envying eyes tried to nestle close to him, Hajime still responded with a slap. “Aan!,” Tio who collapsed happily after saying with a captivating voice was glared at by Hajime with a truly cold gaze. However, she became even happier as she “Haa, haa,” got excited. Hajime let out a deep sigh and said, “This fellow can’t be helped anymore,” as he gave up thinking about her condition.

Hajime and his party were flirting with such feelings, Will who was outside of this got on and sat inside the vehicle while looking at the far distance to sort out his feelings. The line from before became noisy again. Hajime turned his gaze and apparently there were guards coming running. They probably saw the quarrel from a while ago. Rather, they might be trying to confirm what had happened because the gaudy man who was planted on the ground was still unmoving.

The three men who rode on horses while wearing simple armor approached Hajime and his party after asking the situation from the nearby merchants. One of the merchant pointed at Hajime's party, then he pointed at the gaudy man. One of the men ordered one of his companions to go towards the gaudy man. The remaining two men approached Hajime's party who were relaxing (flirting) on the four-wheeler's bonnet. The two men's eyes somewhat sharpened. Not because of duty… but because they envied him.

"Oi, you! What's with this commotion! Beside, what's that black box? Explain yourself!"

Though the man spoke oppressively to Hajime, there's no force at all because he kept sneaking a look towards Yue and the girls. Hajime already expected this development as he looked at the guard and briefly answered.

"This is my artifact. I threw that man away because he tried to put his hand on her. Can you believe it? How can he suddenly try to hug her? Look, she is frightened by that… Mister Guards, don't tell me you're going to ally with that sex offender? If so, we won't go to Fhuren ever again… how can I be treated as a criminal while you defend the offender… right?"

Blah, blah, Hajime spoke in such manner about vague things as if they were the facts. Shia stuck to Hajime simply because she wanted to be spoiled, and she didn't look frightened if one looked at her objectively. It was a tragedy!, Hajime warped his expression to sincerely appeal. Will on the vehicle said, "What a smooth talker," as he stared at him but got ignored. The surrounding merchants who became the straight men said, "Rather than trying to embrace, he was thrown before he finished speaking," or "Far

from being frightened, it's more like you're flirting," with small voices which were also ignored.

However, it was needless to say what their answer was, as it was obvious which one to believe between the words of a gaudy man and the side of beautiful girls and women. "That guy is the worst," they easily believed him without examining it further.

Then at that time, one of the guards inclined his head when he saw Hajime's party then he said, "Ah," as if he recalled something then he whispered to the other guard to confirm it. Unknown to what was said, the other guard said in a similar manner, "Now that you mention it," as he thoroughly examined at Hajime's party.

"… You, are you Hajime, Yue, and Shia?"

"Nn? Ah, that's certainly so…"

"I see. Then, are you returning from the guild's branch head's request?"

"Ah, though it is so… did a notification come from by the branch head?"

The guard nodded in consent towards Hajime's expectations. The guard immediately told them to pass the gate without waiting for their turn. They moved using four-wheeler and followed by the guards. The people in the lines were curious about what happened

as they narrowed their eyes to watch them move, and Hajime's party once again set their feet in Fhuren.

* * *

Hajime's party were currently inside the reception room of the adventurer guild.

They were served with high-grade teas along with the cakes, and they unreservedly drank it while they waited for five minutes. The one who kicked the door open and jumped inside was Ilwa Chang who requested Hajime's party to rescue Will.

"Will! Are you safe!? Do you have any injury!?"

Casting aside his calm atmosphere from the past meeting, he didn't even greet them as Ilwa was confirming Will's safety when he saw him. It might be because he was very worried about him.

"Ilwa-san… I am sorry. It was because I said something unreasonable that you were troubled …"

"… What are you saying… It was me who introduced you to a dangerous commission… You really are safe… I can't face Greille and Sarria if something happened to Will… They are also quite worried about you. It'll be better if you quickly show your face to relieve them. I have reported to them about your safety. That information came to Fhuren several days ago…"

“Father and Mama are… I understand. I will immediately go to meet them.”

Ilwa told Will where his parent stayed and nodded, telling him to go. Will once again expressed his gratitude to Ilwa as he bowed, then he formally greeted Hajime’s party before he, as promised, went outside the room. For Hajime, he was glad it went well, but he seemed dissatisfied because he didn’t make proper thanks.

After Will went outside, Ilwa formally looked at Hajime. Ilwa was smiling with a calm expression, then he deeply bowed to Hajime.

“Hajime-kun, thank you very much for this. I never thought you’d really bring Will back alive. I can’t express my gratitude with words.”

“Well, Will survived because he has good luck.”

“Fufu, is that so? There is certainly that… but isn’t it the truth that you protected him from tens of thousands of demonic beasts? Goddess’s Sword-sama?”

While he smiled radiantly, Ilwa called Hajime with his nickname from the previous battle against the large crowd of demonic beasts. Hajime’s cheeks cramped. Apparently, the guild’s branch head owned the method to transmit the information faster than Hajime’s movement.

“… That information spread quite fast, huh.”

“It is because of the guild executives. There’s also the artifact for long-distance report. And I also have my subordinate to follow you. Though I said that, he seemed to have been always left behind to wander around because of those unexpected movement type artifacts… It was the first time I heard him complaining. After all, he held the greatest ability to gather information.”

Ilwa said as he smiled wryly. It seemed he hired an observer since the beginning. It was a natural measure as a guild’s branch head, so Hajime wasn’t angry. Rather, he quite sympathized with the branch head’s direct subordinate when he thought of him always rushing around because of him.

“Even so, the situation was truly a serious one. I never thought the accident in the Northern Mountain Ranges area to be a sign for such great disaster… It was truly a good thing I asked you for that request. I’m also interested in the power that could annihilate tens of thousands of demonic beasts… Can you let me hear it? Just what on earth had happened?”

“Ah, I don’t mind. But, before that I ask you for Yue and Shia’s status plates… and about Tio—”

“Hmm, if those two get one, then please this one too.”

“… Is what she said.”

“Hmm, certainly, and the credibility will increase if I can see what’s in the plate… okay.”

After saying so, Ilwa called the staff and three brand new status plates were brought in.

As the result, Yue and the girls’ statuses were as followed.

Name			
Age	22 Years Old		
Gender	Female		
Class	Priestess (Miko)		
Strength	200		
Stamina	200		
Agility	200		
Magic Power	9999		
Magic Resistance	9999		
Skills			

- Automatic Regeneration
  - Pain Control
- All Elements Aptitude
- Compound Magic
- Magic Manipulation
  - Magic Emission
  - Magic Compression
  - Remote Control
  - Efficiency Rise
  - Magic Absorption
- Composition by Imagination
  - Rise in Ability to Imagine

- ○ Simultaneous Compound of More than Two Magic
- ○ Delayed Invocation

- Blood Conversion
  - ○ Body Strengthening
  - ○ Magic Conversion
  - ○ Vitality Conversion
  - ○ Magic Strengthening
  - ○ Blood Pact
- High Speed Magic Recovery
- Creation Magic
- Gravity Magic

Max: 6,100			
Max: 6,125			
Magic Resistance			

Skills

- Foresight
  - ○ Automatic Invocation
  - ○ Assumption of Future
- Magic Manipulation
  - ○ Body Strengthening
  - ○ Part Strengthening
  - ○ Rise in Conversion Efficiency 2
  - ○ Concentrated Strengthening
- Gravity Magic

Name	Clear Old		
Race	Female		
Class	Guardian		
Title	Dragon Form: Adult		
Title	Dragon Form: Child		
Magic Resistance			

Skills

- Dragon Form
  - ○ Dragon Scales Hardening
  - ○ Rise in Magic Efficiency
  - ○ Rise in Physical Strength
  - ○ Roar
  - ○ Wind Clad
  - ○ Pain Conversion
- Magic Manipulation
  - ○ Magic Emission
  - ○ Magic Compression
- Fire Element Aptitude
  - ○ Decrease in Magic Consumption
  - ○ Effect Raised
  - ○ Duration Raised
- Wind Element Aptitude
  - ○ Decrease in Magic Consumption
  - ○ Effect Raised
  - ○ Duration Raised
- Compound Magic

Though their statuses didn’t reach Hajime, theirs were at the level where not even a few of the summoned cheat group could become.

It was at the level that couldn't even be reached by the Hero when he uses Limit Break.

As expected, Ilwa was speechless as he became slack-jawed. It couldn't be helped. Yue and Tio owned the skills such as "Blood Conversion" and "Dragon Form" which were peculiar skill for the races assumed to have been perished, and their statuses were too abnormal. Shia also completely ignored her tribe's common sense. It was strange to not be surprised by them.

"My, my… I had thought there must be something, but something like these are…"

Drenched in cold sweat, Ilwa's usual smile cramped when he saw the statuses, and Hajime uncaringly said in agreement. He listened to it normally, even if the silly contents seemed to be fixed through their lives, he could not help believing it because the numerical values and skills he just seen were proven by the status plates. When Ilwa finished hearing all of his stories, he sat deeply on the sofa with a weary look that made him seemed like he suddenly aged for at least ten years.

"… Indeed, you were able to catch Catherine-sensei's attention. Though I had expected Hajime-kun alone was someone from different world… the actual things are far more oblique, huh…"

"… Then, branch head-san. What will you do? Are you going to hand us over to the church as dangerous elements?"

Ilwa corrected his seating as he looked at Hajime as if criticizing

his question.

“That joke is too cruel. You think I can do that? To become your enemy is an impossible choice as an executive of the guild… Also, I don’t want you to take lightly of me. You are my benefactors. It is not something I can forget for the rest of my life.”

“… I see. Then that’s good.” Hajime shrugged his shoulders and used his gaze to express his sorry and gratitude.

“I have even thought, at the very least, to become your support just as promised, as guild executive and as my own self. Well, at least I will show you that now. For now, I don’t think the people from above will do anything to you as their discussion became complicated. At least I will make all of you “Gold”-rank adventurers to make it easier to support you. Normally there would be various troublesome procedures to become “Gold”… I will somehow do it later. After all, there are Catherine-sensei and my recommendation along with your fame as “Goddess’s Sword”.”

Ilwa shown a lavish hospitality as he prepared a letter with his family crest, so they could use the VIP room of the inn directly operated by the guild while they were in Fhuren. If anything, though there was his gratitude for the recent event, he seemed to also want to create a friendly relationship with Hajime’s party. He spoke of everything in seriousness without having any reason to hide anything.

Afterwards, when they separated from Ilwa, Hajime’s party went to relax in the VIP room at the hotel directly managed by the guild in Fhuren’s Central Ward. On their way, they met Will’s parents, Count Greille Greta and Saria Greta, who came to greet them

accompanied by Will. They were different from the nobles he had saw in the Royal Palace, since they seemed to be fairly logical people. He was convinced that Will's goodness came from his parents.

Count Greille wanted to thank them by inviting them to his house by giving them money and goods, but he left with a message saying he'd help them if they were in trouble because Hajime firmly refused the rewards.

A wide living room: there were four other rooms beside the room, and all of them were equipped with canopied beds overseeing the Sightseeing Ward from the terrace. Hajime was lying down on the super big sofa in the living room as he sighed in relaxation.

Yue lifted Hajime's head and rested it on her lap as usual. Shia was sitting at his feet, while Tio was looking around the room in curiosity.

"Let's rest for today. We will do things such as shopping and buying the food tomorrow."

Hajime narrowed his eyes as he felt pleasant from Yue's hand that was brushing his hair, and he said the schedule for tomorrow. Shia was waiting for it. She timidly shook Hajime's reclining body.

"That's~, Hajime-san. The promise…"

“… I remember. Shall I take you to the Sightseeing Ward…”

As the reward for Shia’s hard work, Hajime promised to go on a date with her for a day. Shia was looking at Hajime with expectant eyes. Hajime was hesitating because it was necessary to procure the food, but Yue concluded his hesitation. Her soft hands were placed on Hajime’s cheeks and she narrowed her eyes gently.

“… Tio and I will be the one shopping. So go with Shia, okay?”

“… Is it okay?”

“Nn… in exchange…”

“In exchange?”

Yue looked at Hajime and her best friend Shia, who was truly expecting the promise, with a gentle gaze as she exuded a big-sister-like atmosphere, and she urged Hajime. Hajime tried to confirm the continuation of her words with a somewhat complex look, and Yue’s gentle expression changed into bewitching one as she licked her lip. She followed it by drawing her face closer to Hajime’s ear and…

“… I want you to love me a lot tonight.” She said.

Hajime covered his face with his hand and said, “… Nn,” a Yue-like

answer. That's all they needed. Though he was confident of being able to win against the guardian in the depth of the dungeon, perhaps for his whole life he wouldn't be able to defeat Yue or so Hajime thought.

"… Before I notice, they naturally began to make the world of their own… not surprising from Yue-san."

"Hmm, even so, this one feel the undiscouraged Shia is considerably strong. Well, this one has no problem because this one is satisfied as long as Master bullies this one… Shia has quite the obstacle~"

While Shia directed a, "As expected of Master," gaze towards Yue with respectful eyes, and Tio sent an interested gaze towards Shia and Yue's relationship where no envy could be felt. Afterwards, when Hajime managed to regain his senses that flew outside because of Yue's surprise attack, the four of them chatted, and the day grew into the night.

* * *

Extra

Midnight that day.

As the moon approached the zenith… two shadows stealthily moved to the terrace in the top floor of the inn directly managed

by adventurer guild. The two dressed in black just like assassins, slowly killed their presences as they approached a certain room's window, and they silently look inside.

The things inside that room were…

"Fuwah! Please look at that, Tio-san! That intense… Yue-san will break you know."

"WHOOAA! Master is so intense! H-However, Shia. Yue's expression… is certainly bad! Even though this one is also a woman, this one can feel something strange…"

"Ack, it is definitely an enchanting expression that cannot be resisted! She looks so happy~, I'm so jealous~."

"Mmm~, though this one is satisfied as long as Master bully this one… that kind of thing isn't bad, too~."

… After this, Hajime who noticed their presences, needless to say, gave the two peeping toms a harsh punishment.

* * *

Status Information:

Blood Pact — Drastic increase in status of the person whom is

chosen to suck blood from.

Composition by Imagination — Magic array can be completely made just by imagining it.

Rise in Conversion Efficiency 3 — 1 unit of magic will be converted into 3 unit of physical strength.

Dragon Scales Hardening — Dragon scales can be further hardened using magic. It is possible to further increase the basic status using Dragon Form.

Author's Note:

The statuses are still tentative.

There's possibility of adjustment depending on the future development.

Arifureta: Volume 7 Chapter 7

Chapter 67 of the Web Novel.

Hajime becomes a Papa I

“Fufufufu~n, fufufu~n! What a fine weather~ It’s a splendid weather for a date~.”

In Fhuren’s main street, the rabbit eared girl, Shia, was cheerfully walking while skipping. Her clothing was different from her usual durable adventurer style clothes — it was a lovely milk-white one-piece dress. With narrowed collar, there was a big opening in the cleavage and Shia’s rich breasts were boing, boing!, swaying as she walked. A slender, black belt was attached on her waist. Her rich hip-line and the indescribably enchanting curve were clearly displayed. Slender, tight, and beautiful legs were extended from the skirt 15 cm above her knees, and the gazes of men were gathered on the pair of bouncing hills.

But the most attractive thing about her was her atmosphere and her smile. With blushing cheeks, I am happy, so it cannot be helped!, was overflowing from her without any effort to conceal it. About her being a demi-human or how she wore a slave’s collar-like thing, could be said as something trivial as the surrounding people fell for her. There were also elderlies who smiled as if they saw something pleasant.

Behind the ecstatic Shia, was Hajime who walked on with a wry smile. Maybe because she was so elated, Shia repeatedly walked a little ahead, and then turned around with a smile as she waited for

Hajime to catch up. Just like the surrounding people, Hajime inadvertently smiled.

“Your spirit is too high, Shia. You will fall down if you don’t look in front, you know?”

“Fufufu, I won’t make such blunder~, after all I have been trained by Yue-sa—!?”

Because of Hajime’s warning, Shia turned around again as she replied to him, she almost fell down. Hajime promptly held her waist to support her. Though there wouldn’t be any problem considering Shia’s physical strength, she wore a short skirt today. He would not let the men who pant as they looked at Shia to become lucky perverts.

“I-I am sorry.”

“See, now that you understand, walk right beside me.”

As she shrunk her body because of the embarrassment from being held by the waist, Shia demurely tugged Hajime’s sleeve, and this time she began to walk in slower pace next to him. Because of how lovely she looked with blushing cheeks, most of the surrounding men seemed to have been knocked out. Some of them were because of the fists from the lovers by their side.

Hajime and Shia kept collecting the surrounding gazes, and they

finally entered the Sightseeing Ward. There were various facilities inside the Sightseeing Ward. For example were theatres and street performers avenue, circus, music halls, aquarium, arena, game studio, observatory, colorful flower garden along with huge maze of flowers, and even beautiful buildings along with the plazas.

“Hajime-san, Hajime-san! Let’s go to Meerstat first! I have never seen a marine creature before!”

With a guide book in hand, Shia’s rabbit ears moved as though to express, “Let’s go! Let’s go!” She seemed to have never seen any marine creature because she lived in «Haltina Sea of Trees», so she wanted to go to Meerstat, a famous aquarium in Fhuren’s Sightseeing Ward.

Incidentally, she was used to seeing freshwater fishes because there were lakes and rivers in the Sea of Trees. However, she felt they weren’t the same even though the marine creatures were shaped similar to those fishes. Though Hajime thought them as only fish… he didn’t say anything since he read the mood. Hajime was going to be nice to Shia today.

“Hee~, for marine creatures to be inland… that’s the point. Though the management, maintenance, and transportation must be troublesome…”

Though Hajime wasn’t interested at all, he didn’t reject it since he didn’t have any reason to refuse her. Furthermore, Shia was happily smiling as she pulled Hajime’s hand.

On the way in street performers avenue, their eyes were caught by people who did acrobatic as they challenged the human's limit, when they finally reached the big facility of Meerstat. Maybe as to represent the sea, the whole building was painted in blue and there were crowds of people in there.

The interior was extremely similar to the aquarium in the Earth. However, maybe because they didn't have the technology to make transparent water tanks that could endure the water pressure like the ones on Earth, bulky glass tiles were buried in the fence made of crystal-like metal, and it only somewhat visible.

However, Shia didn't mind it. Her eyes sparkled from seeing the marine creatures for the first time, and she spoke to Hajime while pointing her finger. Right next to them, was a little girl with her family who also pointing with sparkling eyes. Unexpectedly, his gaze met the father-like person's gaze and because Hajime noticed he looked at him with warm gaze. Hajime, who felt awkward, took Shia's hand and moved elsewhere. Shia was surprised by Hajime's action but she was happy he took her hand, and needless to say she returned his grasp while blushing.

After this and that, they enjoyed the aquarium for one hour, when Shia suddenly became wide-eyed when she looked at a certain water tank again, and began to stare at it.

Inside was… a Seaman. It was human-faced fish very similar to the one from the game Hajime knew.

"… Wh-why is he here…"

Shia backed away and trembled. Maybe because the Seaman noticed Shia, it turned to watch her with the same lazy expression from inside the water tank. The tension raised for some unknown reason. Because of two people, Hajime looked at the explanation placed beside the water tank.

According to it, this Seaman was an aquatic demonic beast, and it capable of using peculiar magic called “Telepathy.” It seemed to be able to speak fluently though it rarely spoke, and he confirmed from the description that it was famous as a demonic beast one could converse with.

However, even if it was possible to talk to, it would only answer with an unmotivated voice as though the talk was very troublesome for it. Also, caution was necessary because the person it spoke to would become depressed as a side effect. It like alcohol and becomes talkative as it drinks. However, it wouldn’t be called a conversation as a person would one-sidedly continued to preach to the conversation partner… Incidentally, it was named Lehman.

Since Hajime didn’t know whether Shia was simply staring or if she was having at argument with it. However, when sweat lines started to appear on her face and she didn’t reply to him, or when he talked to it in the normal way, he used “Telepathy” instead.

“You, can you really use telepathy? Can you really converse? Can you understand my words?”

Because of the sudden telepathy, Lehman’s eyes twitched for a moment in response. It followed by shifting its gaze from Shia to slowly looking at Hajime. Shia whose expression expressed, Somehow I won!, was ignored.

“… Tch, this should be our first meeting. First, introduce yourself. That is how you show your manner. Good grief, this is why the young people these days…”

He was taught about manners by the fish with a face of an old man. He regretted his mistake. With cramped cheeks, Hajime tried to talk again.

“… My bad. I am Hajime. Looks like you really can converse. Just what is Lehman?”

“… You know. Just what is human? How can you answer that? That’s why, how would I know the answer. Well, I only can say I am me. No more no less. Also, call me by my name or whatever you like.”

Hajime had thought, “Just how does it think…” But somehow it spoke about common sense, moreover it was rather cool. That was completely unexpected. Wasn’t it written that it was unmotivated?, he wanted to complaint to the aquarium’s staff. Hajime was slightly looking at the distance in escapism, but this time a question came from the Lehman.

“I also want to ask one thing. You, why can you use telepathy? There’s no sign of the use of human’s magic… It was as if you are the same as me.”

It was nothing but a natural question. After all, a human was using

the peculiar magic, “Telepathy.” It was curious as to why he was able to casually use just like it. It might be the cause of why the rarely talkative Lehman was responding to Hajime’s conversation. Hajime explained he was able to use it by eating the demonic beast that was capable of using telepathy.

“… That’s a lot of hardships for someone so young. Okay, ask me anything you want. This old man will answer anything in my knowledge.”

He was sympathized. Apparently, it thought he was so poor that there was no choice other than eating the demonic beast. When it saw his current appearance and he was wearing good clothing, it said as it sniffled, “Looks like you’ve worked so hard, good boy! It make me want to cry.”

Hajime didn’t correct it because it was the true he had some hard times. However, for him to be sympathized by a fish… it was somewhat depressing. He somehow managed to set it aside and asked Lehman various things. For examples, Does a demonic beast have a clear will?, How were the demonic beasts born?, Are there any other demonic beasts people can communicate with?, … Lehman answered that most demonic beasts didn’t have clear will. It didn’t know any other demonic beasts that could understand human language other than its species. Moreover, it didn’t know how the demonic beasts were born.

Moderate amount of time had passed as he asked a lot of things, and they began to gather attention because it was a surreal spectacle for the onlookers to see a young man and a fish with a face of an old man staring at each other. Shia, who began to feel restless, was tugging Hajime’s sleeve, so Hajime rounded up the conversation.

Even though his conversation with Lehman was somewhat interesting, today was decided for him to go out and spend it with Shia. He would not neglect his promise. Lehman also said, “Oops, looks like I have obstructed your date,” as it rounded up the conversation by reading the mood. By the way, they got along so well that they called each other with “Leh-san” and “Ha-boy.” Hajime could see the “nobleness” inside the Lehman.

In the end, Hajime asked why Lehman was in such a place. The answer was…

“Nn? Just as I said before, I was traveling freely… but the underground water which I was swimming through suddenly sprouted outside and I was thrown away… Before I knew, I was in a grassy place beside a spring. Though I won’t die even without water, I cannot move without it. When I tried to ask for help using telepathy… Well, I was brought here.”

Immediately, a line of sweat flowed from Hajime’s forehead. It was obviously the time when they got out from the Great Dungeon of Raisen. Apparently, Lehman was involved and was launched together with them at that spring. Though the real culprit was the idiot Miledi, there was no change that they got it involved.

Hajime, ahem, cleared his throat, then asked the Lehman.

“Ah～, Leh-san. That is, what can I say. Do you want to get out of here?”

“? That’s, of course. For I am more suited for traveling freely. It is the best for a living thing to live the natural way. Rather than inside such a cage, I prefer to die in the ocean.”

Lehman used lot of connotations in those words. Therefore, Hajime who liked the Lehman decided to help it because he was also at fault.

“Leh-san. If so, I will bring you to a nearby river. Apparently, your situation was caused by my party. Since I will bring you out in few minutes, please believe in me and I will quietly transport you.”

“Ha-boy… Heh, though you are young, to have such way of thinking… I don’t know what will you do, but no one should be able to match your power. I will believe in Ha-boy and wait.”

Hajime and Lehman exchanged manly smiles. As if understanding the their expressions, Shia’s cheeks cramped as she said, “Huh? Don’t tell me another rival?” Hajime pulled Shia’s hand as he turned on his heel from the place. Although the reason was unknown, the Lehman used “Telepathy” to Shia who followed Hajime.

“Little miss, I am sorry to surprise you back then. Don’t let go of the hand tied to Ha-boy’s.”

“Heh? Heh? Umm, well, there is no need to worry about that! I have my first kiss with Hajime-san thanks to that! Also, I definitely won’t let it go!”

Though she didn't understand, Shia firmly answered. Lehman displayed a satisfied smile as it looked at Shia. "How meddlesome," Hajime prayed for his new friend's good luck from now on as he left the Meerstat aquarium with a wry smile.

After a few minutes, a claw crane broke through into the lower part of the aquarium. It crushed Lehman's water tank, used the arm to catch the Lehman that came out along the water splendidly, defeated the staff members who were after them (there were no injury). Furthermore, it destroyed a wall to get out and disappeared far into the sky; these kinds of things happened. There were commotions about whether it was a new kind of demonic beast or the Lehman's hidden ability… but that was something trivial.

* * *

At that time, on the other side…

Yue and Tio were shopping inside the Commercial Ward. Even so, because there were already a large amount of necessary thing inside Hajime's "Treasure Box," they could only replenish a small amount of the things they consume in their travel. Therefore, rather than shopping for food, the two were just indifferently wandering around the various shops in the Commercial Ward.

"Hmm. Even so, Yue. Art thou really okay about that?"

" ? … About Shia?"

“Mm-hmm. It is possible that various things had progressed right now, thou know? Have thou thought of that?”

Tio was questioning Yue, who was judging the things exhibited in the boutique. Her tone was filled with some curiosity. Is it okay to be this calm? Isn’t it possible she passed thou? Tio was interested in the mysterious relationship of the three. Because they would be traveling companions from now on, she wanted to converse without reserve for once.

On the other hand, Yue wasn’t was shaken. She simply shrugged her shoulders and looked at Tio. There was no sense of crisis at all.

“… I am happy if it happens.”

“Happy? Though the man thou love becomes intimate with another woman?”

“… It is not another woman. It’s Shia.”

When Tio inclined her head, Yue continued to talk as she walked around the shop.

“… In the beginning, when she tried to get close to Hajime… I was annoyed because she clearly had another intent… However, I understand now.”

“Understand?”

“… Nn, that girl always did her best. Always used her utmost effort. All for the sake of her important things and the things she loves. She is straightforward for the better or worse.”

“Hmm. This one understands just by seeing her… Is that why thou have such a bond?”

Tio smiled when Shia, someone she was associated with only for a short time, floated in her head. She naturally smile as she thought of the moodmaker girl, whose smile didn’t disappear even with the hardship she has experienced for being a demi-human. Moreover, although there were a lot of disappointing things about her because she was still young, Tio liked Shia. However, she thought it was a weak reason to allow her to go on a date with Yue’s lover. In the end, she wanted to confirm another reason than Yue just liking Shia.

“… The other is.”

“Other? What doest thou mean by other?”

Because of Tio’s questioning face, Yue began to smile as she answered.

“… Shia also likes me. At least as much as Hajime. They are the same even though they have different meaning… Isn’t that cute?”

“… Indeed… Master and Yue, ye both are necessary for that child… There are only few people who could be fond of the one who treated them unkindly. That might be her virtue. Hmm, this one thought this one understood what Yue thinks of Shia… But what about Master? Have thou thought Master might be captivated by her? Don’t thou understand that child’s charm?”

Yue shrugged her shoulders as if those things were ridiculous, and this time she displayed a bewitching smile. Eyes narrowed, cheeks blushed, she licked her lips. Her seductiveness overflowed from her body though she was small just like a little girl. Men and women who were walking around them stopped to look at her. In the following moments, accidents appeared here and there; pedestrians collided because they walked while their eyes were still nailed on Yue. Overflowing sensuality came from Tio’s voluptuous body, but beside her was blurred. Tio recalled the time when she peeped at Yue last night and she became charmed by her.

“… I want to increase Hajime’s “important ones.” However,… only I am “special”… if you think you can take him, then try it. No matter the time, the place, or who it is… I will be the winner.”

“Can you do it?”, Yue implied the declaration with a smile, and Tio backed away from the force she felt coming from the gap of Yue’s usual expressionlessness. Because she backed away unconsciously, Tio revealed a surprised expression and she raised both hands to show she gave up with a bitter smile.

“Well… this one never thinks of starting a fight. This one feel it is

enough as long as Master abuse this one.”

“… A pervert.”

Yue looked at Tio with an amazed expression while the person in question only laughed cheerfully. Thus, Yue, who had guessed Tio was trying to find a way to relate with them when she purposely began such talk, could only sighed because the Ryuujin race she longed for turned out to be a pervert. However, she smiled wryly as they seemed to be able to get along.

As such, the distance between Yue and Tio slightly shortened as they went out of the boutique and,

BOOM!!

“Guwa!!”

“Ahhh!!”

The wall of a nearby building was immediately destroyed, and the screams of two men could be heard from there as they appeared with their faces planted on the ground. In addition, several men were also blown away from the window of the same building just like pinballs as they screamed. Sounds of destruction resounded from inside the building, and with that, the wall cracked and collapsed as though the building received a severe earthquake.

With several tens of men convulsing with their limbs bent in strange directions as they lined up on the street. The building that could no longer endure the damage finally collapsed with a tremendous roar.

Among the onlooker who had scattered in a distance, Yue and Tio perceived familiar voices and presences. Thus, they stayed in their places and they looked inside the scattered dust with amazed expressions.

“Ah, ah, these are the two’s presences, as expected…”

“Huh? Aren’t those Yue-san and Tio-san? Why are you here?”

“… That’s our line… You are overdoing it for a date.”

“Seriously~, well? Oh Master, just what kind of trouble hath art thou gotten involved in this time?”

Just as Yue and Tio perceived, what appeared from the scattered dust were Hajime and Shia. The two should be on a date now, but they approached Yue and Tio with familiar weapons on their arms. She was wearing adorable clothing, so the appearance of Shia who shouldered a brutal weapon was truly a surreal one.

“Ahaha, even I never thought it will turn into such a date… It just that the development… we destroyed a facility related to an organization that trades people…”

“… What kind of development resulted in fighting an underground organization?”

Yue displayed an amazed expression as Shia let out dry laugh. Tio was looking at Hajime asking for an explanation.

“Well, we are rather short handed for now. So can you help me after I explain the situation?”

As he put Donner into the holster, Hajime threw away the men who tumbled on the ground like pebbles as they obstructed his way. While looking at the piled up men with a leer, Hajime began to explain the situation to Yue and Tio.

Arifureta: Volume 7 Chapter 8

Chapter 68 of the Web Novel.

Hajime becomes a Papa II

After they left the Meerstat aquarium and ate their lunches, Hajime and Shia strolled around the maze of flower beds and street performers' avenue. In Shia's arm, there were many wrappers of food item bought from various stalls, and she was currently occupied with the vanilla-like ice cream.

"You ate a lot… Were they that good?"

"Nom… Yes! They are really delicious. As expected of Fhuren, even the level of their food stalls are high."

"…You'll grow fat if you eat too much."

"…Hajime-san, those are words that shouldn't be said to a woman."

Because of Hajime's words, the hand she was using to eat stopped for a moment as she made excuses under her breath, "I will exercise later… I will also eat less tomorrow…," and Shia continued to enjoy the sweets from the stalls. While Hajime walked beside Shia with a wry smile, his expression changed suddenly to a dubious one. He turned around and looked down.

Shia noticed him and asked while inclining her head, “Nn? Is something wrong, Hajime-san?”

“Nn—? The sign perception perceived a worrying presence…”

“Did you use the sign perception?”

“I always activate it as precaution.”

“U~n? But, are you that worried? And even if you say a presence…”

Shia looked at the surrounding, she tilted her head and said, “There are a lot of people around, you know?”

“No, that’s not what I mean… What I perceived was from below?”

“Below?… you mean the drainage? Umm, wouldn’t it be the maintenance staff?”

“If so, then I wouldn’t be worried about it. It’s a small and weak presence… Maybe it’s a child? Moreover, a weakened one.”

“Eh!? Th-That’s bad! I-It is possible the child fell into a hole and drowned! Hajime-san! Let’s chase after it! Show me the way!”

The moment Shia heard Hajime’s explanation, she immediately ran. Although Aiko’s words about his “lonely way of life” had been etched in his heart, but the truth was that Shia moved faster than him, which made him smile wryly. Shia’s brightness and straightforwardness seems to have been a good influence on Hajime.

Shia and Hajime chased after the moving presence underground with a moderate speed. From the town’s structure, they expected the drainage to flow along the street. When they immediately passed by the presence, he pressed his hand on the ground to transmute it. Red sparks kindled, and a hole connected to the underground immediately opened.

Hajime and Shia unhesitatingly jumped into the hole. He then used “Aerodynamic,” held onto Shia right before they fell into the drainage that released the bad smell, and they landed on the passage on both side of the waterways.

“Hajime-san, I can also feel the presence. I will jump and pull it!”

“No, it is okay.”

Hajime stopped Shia, who tried to jump without minding that her clothing would be dirtied, by holding her neck root. He then once again pressed his hand on the ground and used transmutation. A lattice was created along with red sparks in the waterway. Because

the lattice was set diagonally up, the child being swept away moved towards them and stopped when caught by the lattice. Hajime operated the gimmick in his left arm. His arm extended to catch the child, and he pulled it to the passage.

“This child…”

“Well, this child is still breathing… Let’s get out of here for now, the smell is very bad here.”

Seeing child they saved, Shia widened her eyes in surprise. Hajime also had knowledge of the child’s appearance, so he was surprised in his mind. However, their current location wasn’t good physically and mentally, so they moved to another location.

Somehow, since it didn’t seem to be an accident where a child fell into the waterways and drowned, Hajime who was hesitating to return to the street from the hole he created earlier, used transmutation close to the hole and opened another hole in the drainage passage after recalling the arrangement of the buildings on the surface. Thus, while holding the small child wrapped in a blanket he took out from the “Treasure Box,” they began to move.

Red sparks suddenly appeared in a certain back alley, and a hole opened on the ground. The ones who jumped out from there were Shia and Hajime carrying a small child with him. Hajime used transmutation to close the hole and he shifted his gaze back towards the child he was holding.

From the child’s stature, he or she should be around 3 or 4 years

old. With long emerald green hair, and though the child was dirty, it didn't change her lovely features. The child should be a girl. However, the most eye catching thing were her ears. Unlike humans, her ears were fan-like fins. In addition, what peeked out from inside the blanket were maple-like small hand, and a folded thin film attached in between her fingers.

"Looks like this child came from Sea-dweller tribe… Just why is she in such a place…"

"Well, I am certain it wasn't for a good reason."

The Sea-dweller tribe was a tribe with considerably special position even among the demi-human races. They lived in «Seaside Town of Elisen», located offshore of the sea right beside «Great Dessert Guryuu-en» in the west of the continent. Using their special characteristic, the tribe caught 80% of the marine products that appeared in the market in this continent. It was the reason why they were publicly protected by Herrlicht Kingdom even though they are demi-human race. In the end, it was all about the money, since they were protected because they could be used even while the discrimination continued.

That was why it was unbelievable for a person of the Sea-dweller's tribe, who were being protected, to be washed away in the drainage of an inland's big city, even more so when it was a child. The smell of crime was intense.

As they were thinking of the girl from the Sea-dweller's tribe, her nose twitched, her eyes opened and blinked. Then, the big, circle pupils, began to stare at Hajime. Hajime, whose gaze somehow met hers, didn't look away and stared back. With the unknown tension

floating around, Shia, who seem to know something, approached her with an amazed expression. Suddenly, the stomach of the girl from the Sea-dweller's tribe let out a cute growling sound. With her nose twitching again, she moved her gaze from Hajime and her eyes locked on the wrappers Shia bought from the stalls.

'These?' Shia thought as she tilted her head and moved the wrappings with skewered meats inside from right to left. Just like magnet, the girl's gaze followed. Apparently, she was quite hungry. Shia tried to take out the skewered meats from the wrapping while Hajime began talking to the girl while transmuting.

"Okay, what's your name?"

The girl whose eyes were captivated by the skewered meats Shia was holding was surprised and ducked her body when bright sparks suddenly appeared from the ground followed by a floating square box. Hajime asked her name once more, and after her gazed wandered around for a while, she said her name in small whisper.

"… Myuu."

"I see. I am Hajime, and this is Shia. Then, Myuu, if you want to eat the skewered meat, first wash off the dirt from your body."

Hajime took out clean water he saved inside the "Treasure Box," and filled the bathtub he just transmuted. In addition, he adjusted the water temperature using a flame ore and the improvised bath was completed. It is very dangerous eat a meal with a body dirtied by drainage. Because she seemed to have drank the drainage water,

it was necessary to take detoxifying and bactericidal medicines (marketed commodities).

Not long afterwards, Myuu responded by taking off the blanket along with her clothes dirtied by the drainage, and entered the bathtub. “Ekk!,” though her body was cringed as though she was frightened, she then narrowed her eyes when her body gradually got warmed up. Hajime handed the medicines and towel to Shia, passed the soap to Myuu, and he went out to the back alley to buy Myuu some clothing.

When Hajime returned from the back alley after purchasing Myuu’s clothing, Myuu had already gotten out of the bathtub and was currently being held by Shia, wrapped in a new blanket. While Shia was holding on to Myuu, she said “Ahh,” as she peeled off pieces of meat and fed it to Myuu’s small mouth — chewing to the utmost. Her dirtied hair regained its emerald green shine, and the reflected light created a halo around her head.

“Ah, Hajime-san. Welcome back. Although it’s amateur judgement, there’s no problem with Myuu-chan.”

When Shia noticed Hajime’s return, she reported while continuously stroking Myuu’s moist hair. Maybe because she also noticed Hajime’s presence, she began to stare at him again while still chewing. She might be judging whether he was a good or bad person.

Hajime responded to Shia’s words by nodding, and took out the clothes he bought. It was a milk-white, feminine one piece dress, one that looked similar to the one Shia was wearing. In addition, there was a gladiator sandal-like footwear, and underwear. Because

the items were for children, he was worried about the shop clerk's eyes when he bought them.

Hajime walked towards Myuu, took off the blanket, and put on the one piece dress over her head, quickly followed by the underwear. He knelt before Myuu and put the sandals on each foot. In addition, he took out an artifact that lets out warm air — in other words, a blow dryer — from the "Treasure Box," and dried Myuu's moist hair. Myuu stood completely still but although she continued to stare at Hajime, she gradually narrowed her eyes when pleasant warm air blew.

"… What can I say. Looks like Hajime-san is good at taking care of others."

"What are you saying out of the blue…"

Although Hajime frowned at Shia's words while he was still drying Myuu's hair, his appearance was the evidence he was good at taking care of others, so Shia's cheeks loosened with a smile. Hajime somehow felt embarrassed and averted the topic.

"Well, about what to do…"

"About what we should do with Myuu-chan, right…"

Because she understood the two were talking about her, Myuu alternately looked up between Shia and Hajime.

For now, Hajime and Shia decided to hear Myuu's situation.

As a result, the content Myuu spoke of with her faltering voice was almost exactly what Hajime had expected. On a certain day, she got lost while she was swimming with her mother in a nearby coastline, and while she was wandering around, she was suddenly captured by a man from the human race.

After many harsh days had passed, she was transported quite a distance to Fhuren, and was then put in a dim, prison-like place. Inside the place, there were a lot of children of the human race. After she spent who knows how many days inside, several children who were with her were taken out on a daily basis but never returned. A slightly older boy said they were going to be displayed to guests and priced.

When it was finally Myuu's turn, there was by chance a drainage maintenance that day, so the hole leading to the underground waterway was open. Myuu, who heard the nostalgic sound of the water, immediately jumped inside. Usually, there was nothing a 3 or 4 year old could do because the hurdle was too high, but fortunately, she wasn't handcuffed. Myuu swam with all her might while enduring the unpleasantness of the filthy sewage. Though she was young, she was a child of the Sea-dweller's tribe. The men could do nothing but run on the passageway to try and catch her, but failed to do so while she rode the current.

However, because she wasn't accustomed to long travels, coupled by the stress of getting kidnapped, the unpalatable food, and the bad environment where she was soaked inside the drainage for a long time, Myuu finally lost her consciousness when she reached

both her physical and mental limits. Her consciousness faintly returned thanks to being wrapped in a warm back, and she noticed she was being held by Hajime.

“The guests set the… price. An auction, huh. For children ranging from the human race and Sea-dweller’s tribe to be there, it should be an underground auction.”

“… Hajime-san, what should we do?”

Shia, who looked distressed, embraced Myuu closely. Her eyes were clearing expressing she wanted to do something about it. It was normal for the demi-human race to be captured and turned into slaves. Shia who was deprived of her family because of it, understood the fear and pain.

However, Hajime shook his head.

“It should be better to entrust her to the security office.”

“That’s… you’re going to abandon this child and the other children…”

When Shia heard Hajime’s words, she gritted her teeth. She closely embraced Myuu as she received the shock and looked at Hajime. What Hajime meant as security office was an organization similar to the police force on Earth. By entrusting her to the government-like facility, Myuu could be separated from them. Although it

wasn't an abandonment but a regular procedure of finding lost children, Shia didn't think so.

Hajime tried to explain it to Shia in an easy-to-understand manner.

"You know, Shia. It is the natural thing to send the lost children you find to the security office. Even more so when Myuu is a child of the Sea-dweller tribe. She will surely be protected by them. In addition, to auction someone from Sea-dweller tribe is a great problem. They will investigate it and the other children will be saved. Isn't that enough? Though I'm just guessing, this is probably the dark side of this big city. When Myuu was caught, she would surely placed in a location where the public officials couldn't get their hands there. In other words, this is Fhuren's problem. That's why, isn't it necessary to report it?… Considering your circumstance, I understand your feelings of wanting to do something, but…"

"Th-That… that is true… But, at the very least can we be the one who take this child? After all, we are going to the sea in the west…"

"Haa~, listen. We are going to the Great Volcano first. Don't tell me, are you going to take her along to the dungeon? Or, are you going to tell her to wait in the desert alone? In the first place, we will be considered as the kidnapper's comrade if we take the kidnapped child of Sea-dweller tribe without permission. So, don't say anything unreasonable like this."

"… Uuh, I understand…"

Apparently, in just a short time, Shia had come to adore Myuu. Maybe because she read the mood regarding her situation, Myuu clung onto Shia tightly. Myuu seemed to like Shia as well, and felt the need to resist parting from her.

However, what Hajime had suggested was the right thing, so Shia could only nod and droop her shoulders. Hajime bowed to match Myuu's gaze, and began to explain in a way Myuu could understand him.

"Listen, Myuu, we are going to bring you to people who will protect you. Though it might take time, you will surely be returned to the sea in the west."

"…What about Onii-chan and Onee-chan?" Myuu asked what the two were going to do with an uneasy tone.

"I am sorry but, it will be a goodbye."

"No!"

"Wait, it shouldn't be—"

"No!"

"…"

"Myuu is okay with Onii-chan and Onee-chan! Myuu want to be together!"

Hajime flinched because of the strong rejection. Myuu began to flail around on Shia's lap, just like a spoiled child. Until now, they thought of her as a quiet child, but that apparently was because she was still trying to ascertain Hajime's and Shia's character. Maybe because she judged them to be people she could trust, she acted spoiled. However, she might still be an originally quiet and a bright child.

Hajime didn't feel bad to be trusted by her, but it was necessary to report the situation to the official, and they could not take Myuu along as they were going to conquer one of the Great Dungeons, «Great Volcano» on their way. Even so, "No— —!!," Myuu rejected with all her might, so he gave up on persuading her, and just took her in his arms to bring her to the security office.

Because Myuu didn't want to separate from the people she met miraculously and could actually trust, she strongly pulled Hajime's hair, eye-patch, and scratched his cheeks on the way to the security office as a form of resistance. If not for Shia smiling courtesy beside him, Hajime would have likely been reported as a kidnapper. With his hair in a mess, one eye shut because his eye-patch was removed, and the scratches on his cheeks, Hajime arrived at the security office and explained the circumstances to the pop-eyed security personnel.

The expression of the security member who heard the circumstances steepened, and promised to protect Myuu inside the security office, together with the investigation and procedure to bring Myuu back to her home. Just as Hajime had expected, it was a big problem, and he wanted to excuse himself since the reinforcement should arrive immediately from their headquarters. However…

“Does Onii-chan hate Myuu?” Said by the little girl with moistened eyes together with an upward gaze, no sane person would be able to endure it, including Hajime. “Uh.” He groaned. Although he perseveringly explained she would be able to return home if she was with the security uncle, Myuu’s sorrowful expression didn’t let up in the slightest.

The security member couldn’t endure it any longer, somewhat forcefully separated Myuu from Hajime’s party while he was trying to calm her, and Myuu pulled the man’s hair while letting out a sad voice. Hajime and Shia had finally left the security office, but naturally, they didn’t feel like continuing their date. Shia’s eyebrows were wrinkling in worry while she kept looking back at the security office.

Before long, the security office was no longer in sight, and Hajime wanted to say something to make the depress Shia feel better in a place considerably far away from the office. But at that time…

BooOOooMm!!!!!

An explosion occurred behind them, and black smoke could be seen. The location was,

“Ha-Hajime-san. Over there is…”

“Tch, the security office!”

That’s right. The place the black smoke was coming from was the security office where they were before. The two nodded at each

other, and ran back towards the security office. The worse thing that could happen with such timing entered their minds. The organization which kidnapped Myuu blasted the security office along with Myuu to prevent information leakage.

Suppressing their impatience, they reached the security office. What entered their view were the spectacle of windows' glasses along with the door of the office blown and scattered into the street. However, the building itself didn't that damaged, so there's no worry of it collapsing. Hajime and Shia entered the building and they discovered the uncle from security collapsed under a cover.

The security officer had both his arms broken, and was unconscious. Similar thing happened to the other security members. Fortunately, there was no life-threatening injury. While Hajime was looking at the security members, Shia went to investigate other places, and returned with a hurried look.

"Hajime-san! I can't find Myuu-chan! Beside th-this!" What Shia handed over was a sheet of paper with something written on it.

"If you don't want the child of Sea-dweller tribe to die, come to __ __ with the white-haired girl from Rabbit-man tribe."

"Hajime-san, this is…"

"Looks like these guys are greedy ones…"

Hajime crumpled the paper in his hand and revealed a savage smile. Those guys probably heard the conversation between Myuu

and Hajime's party's in the security office by some means. Afterwards, they judged Myuu was useful as a hostage, and they didn't kill her to silence her because of the thought of obtaining a rare Rabbit-man.

Beside Hajime, was Shia who wore a resolute expression.

"Hajime-san! I-!"

"Say no more. I know it now. These guys are my enemies… No more tedious talk, we will crush them all and take Myuu back."

"Yes!"

Truthfully, Hajime thought it would be better to quickly separate from Myuu because he didn't want her to have to accompany them to such a dangerous journey. After all, Myuu would only have painful times if they unskillfully gave affection to a mentally cornered child. However, he could not leave her when she has been kidnapped for the second time. There was time, and there was something he could do. So to leave such a small child while she's in a predicament would surely be "a lonely way of life." In addition, if he decided to abandon her with the reason of her being unrelated to them, Shia would surely grieved about it.

Furthermore, the other party was also trying to get their hands on Shia. To want to covet Hajime's "important" person, they are considered as "enemies." There was no need to pardon them or hold back. These guys had crossed the line not meant to be crossed.

Hajime and Shia readied their arms, and the monsters quickly ran towards the location of the fools who had woken them up.

* * *

“And that’s happened. When we arrived at the specified location, there were a crowd of armed thugs, but Myuu herself wasn’t there. From the very beginning, they probably thought of killing me and take Shia. For the time being, we massacred everyone except several of them since we wanted to ask Myuu’s whereabouts… but they didn’t know anything. I tortured the others to find where their hideout is… and the same thing happened.”

“Not only me, they were also planning to kidnap Yue-san and Tio-san. That’s why this time, we decided to give them a warning by crushing all of the things related to their organization…”

Yue and Tio, who heard Hajime and Shia’s explanation as they moved. With an amazed expressions towards their constitution towards trouble, wondered how the normal date could have turned into something involving the underground organization of this big city.

“… So, we just need to look for a child called Myuu?”

“Yep. What I found from the questioning, was they are a considerably large organization… so there are a lot of facilities related to them. Will you help us?”

“Nn… leave it to me.”

“Hmm. This one will certainly do it if it’s something asked by Master.”

Yue and Tio unhesitatingly answered. Hajime told them what he found out in regards to the whereabouts of the underground organization’s hideouts. They then proceeded to search for Myuu and crush the organization in groups of two consisting Hajime-Yue and Shia-Tio. Hajime and Shia went separate ways because they thought it would be better to have someone acquainted to Myuu when they find her.

* * *

Nearby the outer wall of Commercial Ward, there was a place separated from Sightseeing and Craftsman Wards. It was a place where the government’s eyes couldn’t reach; a complete underworld, the dark side of this big city. It was dim despite it being daytime, and the people walked with gloomy atmosphere.

In the corner of the place, there was a seven story building. Although it was an employment agency on the surface, it was actually the headquarters of the biggest underground organization specializing in “people” trafficking, “Flithof.” Normally, the headquarters has an eerily and quiet atmosphere, but now, it was noisy with people wandering around. The expressions of the thug-like subordinates who served as messengers were perplexed and irritated, which then warped into fear.

Among tens of people that were always going in and out, two people clad in robes from head to toe slipped in during the confusion, and infiltrated Flithof's headquarters without much difficulty. They advanced while avoiding people who were running around, and finally arriving before a conspicuous room at the highest floor. A man's hoarse yell reverberated into the corridor through the door. Hearing him, the robed people quietly removed their hoods and moved stealthily.

"Stop fucking around around! Ah!? Say it again, you bastard!"

"Hii! L-like I reported before, the number of destroyed hideouts has exceeded 50. The attackers were two groups of a pair."

"Then, what's wrong with that? Are you saying Flithof will be destroyed by four shitty bastards? Aa?"

"Th-that's not i— hmph!?"

Inside the room, when they thinking the yell had stopped, something let out thud! sound and silence ruled for a moment. Apparently, the man who was reporting was knocked down by the yelling man.

"You guys, no matter how you do it, bring back those shitty bastards before me, alive. I don't care what state they are in as long as they are alive. If this keeps up, Flithof's reputation will be ruined. That's why I am going to let those bastards see hell while

they are alive. It is necessary to show a warning to the others. I will reward the guy who can bring them here with five million Ruta! Five millions each! Tell this to all of the members of the organization!”

Because of the instructions of the man, the room became hectic. Just like what the man had instructed, all the members inside the room left to deliver the message to all of the members in the organization. The two eavesdroppers put their hoods on, looked at each other, nodded once. One of them took out a war-hammer on her back and took a pose.

The moment the person inside placed his hand on the door knob, the super-heavy war-hammer was swung with considerably centrifugal and gravitational force.

BaaaANNgG!!!

With a thunderous sound, the door was crushed into pieces. The man who was holding onto the doorknob had his right half crushed. In addition, the people behind him had their whole bodies pierced by the splinters, and were instantly had wounds them they were blown to the other side of the wall.

“There’s no need to inform your employees. The people in question have come.”

“Hmmm, this one will be responsible for people on the outside. Shia, finish this quickly, okay?”

“Thank you very much, Tio-san.”

The people who cultivated the tragedy and casually entered the room were Shia and Tio. Realizing the door had suddenly burst into pieces, and how his subordinates were blown away to the wall across the room; both done so effortlessly, the head of Flithof, Hansen, stiffened and stared wide-eyed. He regained his senses when he heard Shia’s and Tio’s voices. He then quickly took out his weapon and spoke like a Yakuza.

“…Ya bastards are the assailants, huh… That figures… Tch, ain’t ya da ones from da list. Shia and Tio was it? Da other one is the lil’ one, Yue… Indeed y’all’s appearances are first rate. Oi, y’all’s lives will be saved if ya surrender now, y’know? Don’t tell me, ya think ya can return alive after putting ur hands on Flithof’s headquart —!?” Swiiiish “UGYAAAA!!!”

Hansen, who began to speak while looking at Shia and Tio with lust, was coldly cut off by Shia, who fired the shotgun, since there was no need for discussion. The numerous iron balls blew off Hansen’s right arm, which spun and crashed into the wall behind, while guy himself screamed and crouched.

Though the organization members who heard the commotion came running, Tio used fire magic to burn the stairs and they could only stand still because they lost the only way up. Furthermore, she used the scaled-down version of “Breath,” casually mowing them down, and everything on seventh floor turned completely charred except Hansen’s room. With that, there was an unobstructed view of the Flithof’s headquarters. Tio fired Wind Blades and Fire Bullets, just like a machine gun, towards the organization members

who could do nothing but vacantly look up at the upper floor. Because of the merciless attacks, the organization members tried to disperse and scattered about in escape… but only few survived.

While Tio handled the people outside, Shia shouldered Doryukken, approached the screaming and writhing Hansen, and pushed Doryukken to his abdomen. “Guwaa,” he let out sounds of agony as he tried to move the sledgehammer away, but his right hand was useless against the super heavy Doryukken. The only thing Hansen could do was ungracefully pleaded for his life.

“P-Please. Spare me! You can take as much money as you like! I don’t want to be involved with you anymore! That is wh— Gekk!?”

“Please don’t speak without permission. You only have to answer my question, understand? If you don’t, the weight will increase every second… so I recommend you answer everything before your organs burst.”

“… Shia. Thou art Master’s companion after all… Thy speech and behavior are the same.”

Tio, who retorted from behind, was ignored, and Shia asked Hansen about Myuu. When she mentioned Myuu, Hansen showed a dumbfounded expression for a moment. But when she asked about a child from the Sea-dweller tribe, he frantically answered with an anguished expression because Doryukken getting heavier by the second. Apparently, she had been transported to the basement of a hall where the underground auction would occur this evening.

Hansen's subordinates, who probably heard the conversation between Shia's party and Myuu, were the ones who planned on kidnapping Shia. They probably thought that by kidnapping her, they could raise their position inside the organization since she was already in the organization's list to be kidnapped.

Shia touched the telepathy stone on her choker, activated it, and contacted Hajime.

"Hajime-san, Hajime-san. Can you hear me? It's me, Shia."

"…Shia. Yes, I can hear you. What's wrong?"

"I just got the information on Myuu-chan's whereabouts. Hajime-san is currently in Sightseeing Ward, right? Please go ahead because it's around there."

"Roger."

Shia told Hajime the exact location using telepathy. Because of Doryukken's weight, Hansen's complexion had turned blue due to being unable to breathe. Shia deactivated the gravity magic in Doryukken, pulled the normal weighted Doryukken from Hansen and shouldered it. Though he was released from Doryukken's weight, Hansen's consciousness began to faint because of hemorrhage, and desperately asked for Shia's help.

"H-Help me… Take me to the doctor…"

“It’s too convenient for you to use children’s lives as food source… In addition, Hajime-san and Yue-san will be angry at me if I let a human like you escape. That’s why, goodbye.”

“S-Stop!”

Splatter!

Shia shook Doryukken that was swung mightily, to brush off the blood stuck on it, put it on her back, and faced Tio.

“Tio-san. Let’s quickly crush this place and meet with Hajime-san and Yue-san!”

“Whoa… Shia is also merciless, huh… It made this one throbbed slightly…”

“?… Did you just say something?”

“N-Nothing at all.”

The words Tio said in a whisper somehow made Shia feel a chill. Although when she asked Tio, there was nothing but her strange feverish expression, so Shia tilted her head as they continued to diligently destroy the Flithof’s headquarters.

When Shia and Tio left, what remained was numerous corpses and a mountain of rubble. “Flithof” in Fhuren was one of the three biggest underground organizations, and today, it was easily a annihilated.

Arifureta: Volume 7 Chapter 9

Chapter 69 of the Web Novel.

Hajime becomes a Papa III

After receiving the telepathy from Shia, Hajime and Yue rushed towards the informed location. Being sent to the auction, there was no need to worry about Myuu's life, but she must have quite the mental burden. Either way, they must rescue her quickly.

When they arrived at their destination, two huge men dressed in black was standing at the entrance. Thinking Myuu would be transported somewhere else if he made a commotion, Hajime moved to a back alley and used transmutation to infiltrate from the basement.

Accompanied by Yue, they moved quickly while using sign interception. It was truly a shame that there was no cardboard. As long as they have it, there would be no need to use sign interception skill…

Before long, numerous cages could be seen deep inside the basement. The only person who guarded the entrance was sleeping. They passed by the guard, and found around ten of human children inside who were cowering from the cold stone floor. Nine out of ten of these children were to be auctioned today.

In truth, because most humans were believer of Church of the

Saints, it was forbidden to sell or turn humans into slaves. Even so, criminals among human race could become trade goods. It was okay to sell or enslave those who betrayed God. However, the trembling children before their eyes couldn't have possibly fall into such circumstances where they turned into criminals. To begin with, human who turned into slaves with regular procedures would not be sent to an auction. As such, they have been captured and to be sold illegally.

Hajime went over to the cage and met the gazes of the the children who were frightened by the silhouette that appeared all of a sudden. He then asked them in a calm voice.

"Was there a child from Sea-dweller tribe here?"

The frightened children must have thought it was their turn to be sold, so they looked at each other, puzzled by the unexpected question. Myuu's figure was not inside the cage, that's why Hajime he asked the children. He wondered whether there was another jail or she had already been taken out.

The children stayed silent for a while, but when Yue squatted down beside Hajime, looked at them with gentle eyes, and muttered, "… It's okay."

They looked slightly at ease, and one of boy with age of around seven to eight years old timidly answered Hajime's question.

"That's, the child from Sea-dweller tribe was taken a while ago… Onii-san, Onee-san, who are you?"

It was as he expected, she had already been taken out. Hajime inwardly clicked his tongue and answered the uneasy boy simply.

“We’ve come to rescue you.”

“Eh!? You are going to rescue us!?”

Hajime’s words made the boy inadvertently shout, and raised an astonished and joyed look. His voice resounded well inside the dim basement jail. Although the boy panickedly covered his mouth, the guard heard him, shouted, “What’s with the commotion!?” as he woke up and trotted into the basement jail.

Thus, he found Hajime’s party and stiffened for a moment before shouting, “Who are you bastards!?,” pulled a dagger and attacked them. The children screamed as they imagine visions of Hajime and Yue collapsing after being stabbed.

However, it was something impossible for it to happen. Hajime casually gripped the thrusted dagger with his left hand, put his strength into it, and crushed the blade. Hajime opened his palm and dropped the blade’s fragments. The guard could not register what happened, he was dumbfounded for a moment, and cast his gaze down to the dagger on his hand, but he could only see the handle. Finally understanding what happened, the man turned pale and backed away while uttering, “Wh-Wh-.”

Hajime immediately grabbed the man’s head and threw him into

the ground.

SQUIIIISH!

The man immediately died, accompanied with a raw sound.

“A guard should first ring the alarm.”

Saying such a thing with an amazed expression, Hajime who instantly killed the guard made the children pop-eyed in surprise. Without minding their gazes, Hajime used transmutation to disassemble the iron bars. In the children’s eyes, they saw the iron bars disappeared in an instant which made them stiffened, and their mouths were wide open with surprise.

“Sorry, Yue, but can I entrust them to you? Looks like I can’t do anything but rampage now.”

“Nn… leave them to me.”

“The security officers should arrives soon, too, so it’s okay to leave the children to them. The branch head, Ilwa will help us, too… Let’s leave the details to him.”

Yue was watching from a distance with a somewhat sympathized look. It was directed to the Guild Branch’s Head. Actually, before they came here, they had caught a suitable Adventurer to deliver

the telepathy stone to Ilwa, since they thought to explain the situation to him. Status plate with “Gold”-rank was useful in such a time. Because after seeing Hajime’s color, the Adventurer stiffened for a moment and his attitude turned into a formal one… It was similar to how the Japanese greeted a Hollywood Star who came to the town. He even saluted as he agreed to listen to his request.

Incidentally, because telepathy stone could not be activated from Ilwa’s side, he was made to hear the report one-sidedly; about how they got in a fight against a huge underground organization, and that Hajime left the post-treatment to him which made his face turned white in his office.

Hajime once again transmuted a passage from the oubliette to the surface, entrusted the children to Yue, and quickly went towards the auction hall. At the same time, the boy from before called Hajime to a stop.

“Nii-chan! Thank you for helping us! You can definitely save that girl too! She was truly frightened. Even I couldn’t do anything…”

Apparently, this boy didn’t care Myuu was a demi-human, and seemed to have tried to encourage her. He was quite the spirited boy, though he himself was caught. Hajime patted the head of the boy who felt bitter from his powerlessness.

“Wah, wh-what is it?”

“Well, if you feel it was mortifying, then you only have to become stronger. Rather, there’s nothing but to do that. This time is my

turn, but next time it's your turn if something comes up."

After saying so, Hajime quickly turned his heels and went out of the oubliette. The boy held his patted head in blank surprise, had sparkling eyes in next moment, and clenched his fists with a slightly manly face. Yue gazed at the boy with pleased gaze and took the children to the surface.

* * *

The auction hall was wrapped in its own bizarre atmosphere.

The guests in the hall were around 100 people. All of them were wearing queer masks, and no one was making any noise. They only quietly raised placards with numbers when the merchandise they want was up for auction. They hesitated to speak because they didn't want to be identified.

Even those guest who were carefully trying not to let any sound out, involuntarily raised their voices when "that" merchandise came out.

What appeared was a little girl from Sea-dweller tribe inside a square water tank with a distance of two meters in all directions. She was stripped off her clothes, naked, and she shrunk her body as she held onto her knees in the corner of the water tank. Sea-dweller tribe could breathe inside water. It was the reason why she was put inside the water tank, to prove she was a genuine Sea-dweller. And maybe because she had escaped once, metallic shackles were put on her limbs. It was such a cruel sight for such

small limbs.

The numerous gazes that frightened Myuu narrowed and began to compete. Her price went up at a ferocious pace. It was a one time thing, so they probably thought they would be able to buy and hid the Sea-dweller. It was possibly because they had yet to know the commotions that occurred in the daytime.

The noisy hall made Myuu shrink more and more, while clenching her hand that held a black cloth. It was Hajime's eyepatch. When they tried to separate from Myuu, they were too busy trying to calm Myuu down and it was forgotten. Hajime remembered it later, and he wore a spare eyepatch.

Hajime's eyepatch had became Myuu's small support. Being separated from her mother, forced to go through harsh travel, being put inside dark cage, soaked in the sewage, and she desperately ran away. When she thought it was the end, she was wrapped by something warm. She woke up due to a nice smell, and before her was a white-haired boy that wore the black cloth in one of his eyes. She quietly watched him in surprise, and when she tried to look away, he somehow turned to watch her. Myuu also became somewhat obstinate and returned his gaze, when a delicious smell she missed tickled her nose.

Afterwards, she answered when he asked her for her name, and when she saw beautiful red lights being emitted, she was put inside a warm bath. Then, a rabbit eared big sister with similar hair color as the boy — though there were some blue hues — washed her body. Unbeknownst to her, she called the big sister who introduced herself as Shia with "Onee-chan," due to the pleasant feeling from the warm bath and gentle washing.

Being held, sitting on her lap, while being able to eat the delicious meats, Myuu would surely not forget this throughout her life. She was absorbed in being fed, and unbeknownst to her, the boy called Hajime had returned. Although she became slightly cautious, her cautiousness completely dissipated when he took out a lovely clothing, politely dressed her, and blowed her hair dry with warm and comfortable wind.

That's why she was very sad when she heard they would be separated because it was necessary to entrust her to the security office. After being separated from her mother while enduring the solitude and fear for a long time, Myuu didn't want to be separated from the gentle Onii-chan and Onee-chan she met in this faraway place. She wouldn't be able to endure being alone again.

Therefore, Myuu protested with all of her might. She pulled Hajime's hair, scratched his cheeks for so many times, and took the black cloth attached to his eye. She repeatedly said, Myuu wants to stay together! However, the Onii-chan and Onee-chan could not stay with Myuu and as the result, Myuu was left behind.

Myuu thought as her body shrunk more while thinking. As expected, am I left behind because I will be a pain? Are they mad because I took off this black cloth? Am I hated by Onii-chan and Onee-chan? She was very sad, and tears fell from her eyes. If I can meet them once again, I want to apologize for being a pain. I will return this black cloth, and this time… I want us to somehow stay together.

"Onii-chan… Onee-chan…" Myuu muttered when suddenly, the water tank let out a loud sound because of an impact.

“Eeek!,” Myuu became frightened, looked at the surrounding, and she frowned. There was a masked-man in tuxedo nearby, and she noticed him shouting something as he repeatedly kicked the water tank. Apparently, he wanted to let the guests see her swim to further increase her price, and he kicked the water tank because he thought the unmoving Myuu was sleeping.

However, Myuu became even more frightened, further shrunk her body and didn’t move at all. Shrinking her body while strongly clenching onto Hajime’s eyepatch as she endured the impact sound and the shaking water tank.

The man who was the host of the underground auction and member of Flithof feared the unmoving Myuu was sick, which would drop her price, so he told a man to bring a rod. It was to be directly thrusted at her to forced her to move. He unintentionally cursed, and became impatient due to the noises made by the guests.

“Good grief, what an irritating brat. Don’t you trouble a human like me. You dimwitted blockhead!” The host climbed the stepladder, and tried to thrust the rod at Myuu. Myuu shut her eyes tightly and prepared for the impact.

However, instead of the impact… what reached her was the voice of a person she wanted to hear the most.

“I will return those words back at you, okay? You shitty bastard.”

In the next moment, a shadow fell, fluttered from the ceiling, and trampled the host's head who was crushed along with the stepladder when it fell because of the momentum. Splash! Blood splattered from the host as though he had exploded. He was literally crushed to death.

The shadow, Hajime, who appeared with such an impact, didn't even glance at the collapsed man, and hit the water tank with his artificial arm. Smash! The water tank was destroyed, accompanied with sound of something being crushed.

"Eeep!" Myuu was thrown outside along with the flowing water, and she screamed unintentionally.

Myuu was immediately caught by something warm, and she timidly opened her eyes. There was the person she wanted to meet, the one she helplessly expected to come when she heard his voice… He was certainly here. She was held by him. Myuu blinked and quietly watched Hajime just like the first time they met.

"Hey, Myuu. You, why are you always sopping wet when we meet?"

Hajime said jokingly, and quietly watched Myuu. She then asked him in a whisper.

"… Onii-chan?"

“I don’t know who is this Onii-chan is, but Hajime-san whose hair you pulled, cheeks you scratched, and eyepatch you took is certainly me.”

Hajime answered with a wry smile, and Myuu’s round pupil moistened. Following that…

“Onii-chan!!!”

She clung onto Hajime’s neck tightly and began to sob. Hajime had a troubled expression, and patted Myuu’s back. Afterwards, he agilely wrapped her in blanket.

And the two, Hajime and Myuu, who reunited once again near the water, were surrounded by men in black clothing who hurriedly rushed in. On the guests’ seats, there was a commotion and they wondered why Hajime didn’t immediately run away. However, even now, he didn’t look like he want to run away.

“Brat, looks like you aren’t that bright to lay your hands against Flithof. Leave that merchandise and I will give you a nice death, kay?”

Being surrounded by 20 strong looking men, Myuu raised her face from Hajime’s neck and looked up at him with uneasiness. Hajime draw his face closer to Myuu’s ear and whispered, It’ll be troublesome so close your ears and shut your eyes, and he placed Myuu’s small hand to close her ear. Even though Myuu wondered why, she nodded, and she felt at ease because Hajime had a calm attitude without any impatience or anxiety. She obediently used

her hands to cover her ears, closed her eyes, and she buried her face in Hajime's chest.

Veins popped on the forehead of the men in black when they were completely ignored, and shouted loudly, Don't hurt the merchandise! And kill the brat! At the same time,

BOooOOoM!!!

With a dry explosive sound, the head of the leader of the men in black burst. Everyone let out an "Eh?," and became pop-eyed without being able to understand anything. They could only watch the man in black collapse with his brain matter scattered from the back of his head. Using that chance, Hajime further fired in succession. While everyone was stiffened due to not knowing what had happened, the sound of rapid-fire rang out, and when they regained their senses, the number of the corpse who had their head burst totaled to 12.

At that time, they finally noticed the boy before them was nothing ordinary, and the black-clothed men backed away while the guests began to flood the exits, screaming.

"Y-You, what are you! What, how… this—!"

Confused and trying to fight his fear, one of the men in black frantically acted brave by raising his voice. Ten more people came from the interior and flinched when they saw the disastrous scene in the hall.

Seeing them, Hajime snorted.

“Why you ask? Don’t you understand just by seeing me? I come here to take back the thing you took from me. Next… is only a warning from me. This will happen to those who takes something from me. That’s why, shall I make the ending a flashy one?”

Hajime said so and used “Aerodynamic” to go up to the ceiling of the hall and unbeknownst to others, he jumped outside from the hole and reached the roof.

“Yue. Myuu was safely secured. How’s the thing on your end?”

“… Nn, they have reached the shelter. The final will be after all the guests came out.”

“I see, then let’s make the Finale a flashy one.”

“Nn!”

Hajime used “Aerodynamic,” jumping further into the sky. Then, he spoke to Myuu who faithfully closed her ears and buried her face into Hajime’s chest. She blinked and looked at the surrounding when Hajime said, “It is okay now, Myuu,” and… “Fuwah!?,” she said with a surprised voice.

It couldn't be helped because when she opened her eyes, she was in the sky where she could see every part of the town. On the other side, the setting sun that seemed to be blazing, dying the evening sky in red. Above the ground were the man-made lights glittering, creating a beautiful illumination. Myuu's eyes sparkled seeing the magnificent spectacle for the first time and she held Hajime's chest while saying, Kyaa.

"Onii-chan is amazing! Onii-chan can fly in the sky!"

"Not fly, I just jump—… well whatever. More importantly, I will let Myuu watch some flashy fireworks now, okay?"

"Fireworks?"

"Fireworks is… something like explosion."

"Explosion?"

Though he could not give a good explanation, Hajime didn't mind it since the thing he need to do was still the same. While he holding Myuu with his right arm, he used "Aerodynamic" to stay in the sky, and took out a ring from "Treasure Box." It was a remote detonator of the bomb made with "Induction Stone." In fact, he had scattered the bombs into suitable locations while looking for Myuu.

"Well then, time to start. Ta~ma~ya~."

“Ta~ma~ya~?”

The moment Hajime and Myuu’s voice resounded in the evening sky, tremendous roars rang the entirety of Fhuren and horrendous impact ran through buildings related to Flithof. Even the museum used as the underground auction hall where, Historical building? Work of arts? Are those delicious?, was said to be crushed to bits. Flames burst out into the sky along with the tremendous explosions. The surrounding buildings and the sky were dyed in red by something other than the evening sun.

“Eeeeh!?”

“What do you think, Myuu? Were you surprised?”

“Fireworks, scary.”

Myuu trembled because of the grand explosions, and frantically clung to Hajime.When it came down to the final blow, dark clouds suddenly began to shroud the sky slightly away from them. Following that, four “Thunder Dragons” appeared accompanied with thundering howls. The number had increased though their sizes were half from when there was only one.

The four “Thunder Dragons” Yue created scattered into different directions of the blazing red evening sky. Almost all of the people in Fhuren witnessed their majestic forms. The four Thunder Dragons let our thundering roars and “fell” at the same time onto

four of Flithof's important bases that were left behind. Their lightnings dyed the surrounding sky, and the roaring sound of collapsing building resounded within Fhuren. With bursting flames and the scattered dust, the sunset in Fhuren in addition to being dyed in red by flames was just like a town in a war-time after an air raid.

Incidentally, the common people unrelated to this event were unharmed. He had confirmed there was no one around unrelated to Flithof by using Unmanned Reconnaissance Planes into the related facilities and the buildings' circumferences. The people who were blown off and turned to cinders were only those related to Flithof. Their identities, however, were unidentifiable.

"Hajime-san! Is Myuu-chan okay!?"

"Wa-wait Shia. Eh, that's too fast!"

While he and Myuu was looking at the raising flames and smokes, a telepathy came from Shia. Since Hajime didn't let Shia in on the details of what he was going to do, she was surprised by the explosions and the "Thunder Dragon"s, so she asked while panicking.

"It's okay. She is safe. Looks like… those bastards' bases are all destroyed. Perhaps we should meet at the branch head, Ilwa's place though he might be screaming right now."

"Ha~, thank god~. Branch head's place, is it? Roger. I will immediately go there so please come quickly with Myuu-chan,

okay?”

“Ah, okay. Then, see you there.”

“Yes.”

Because Hajime was suddenly looking at the distance in silent, Myuu looked at him in wonder. When Hajime said, “We will meet with Onee-chan soon, okay?,” Myuu smiled happily while saying, “Onee-chan!”.

Hajime, who descended to the surface, met up with Yue who had entrusted the children to the securities. She quietly watched Myuu who was held by Hajime. Myuu restlessly looking around, and then looked up at Hajime. Her eyes were saying, “Who is this person?”

“Myuu, she is Yue. My lover?”

“Eh? Lover? … Then, Shia-oneechan?”

“My companion.”

“Not a lover?”

“Of course not.”

“… No matter what?”

“I will say it again and again… my lover is Yue.”

“Hmm～”

After being introduced to Yue, Myuu looking at Yue with a somewhat dissatisfied expression. Yue was still watching Myuu quietly. As if to ascertain something, Myuu returned Yue’s gaze. The two were staring at each other for a while, but the balance unexpectedly broken. Yue was trotting closer to them.

“Uhh,” Myuu was cautious. However, Yue didn’t mind Myuu’s cautiousness and took her away from Hajime. Yue made a Kyaa～ sound as she tightly embraced Myuu. “Ugh～” Although Myuu groaned and tried to resist, Yue didn’t let her go. After that, she said,

“… So cute.”

Apparently, she had come to like Myuu very much. Hah Myuu, who finally caught her breath, raised her face, and she and Yue were looking at each other in a close range.

“… Myuu. I am Yue. You’ve tried your best alone. Truly admirable.”

Yue’s eyes gently soften, and patted Myuu’s head while still embracing her saying, “Good girl, good girl.” With her gentle hand and warm atmosphere, Myuu relaxed and tears began to flow. Then, she began to cry loudly, Waa— When she met Hajime again, she still felt the tension that’s why she could not cry. However, at

this moment, she relaxed and could let out all of her feelings completely.

With a wry smile, Hajime said, “As expected of Yue,” and they waited until Myuu finished crying before heading towards Adventurer Guild’s Branch Headquarters.

* * *

“Collapsed buildings, numbered twenty-two. Partially destroyed ones, numbered forty-four. Completely annihilated buildings, numbered five. Death of 95 members of Flithof confirmed. Disabled, numbered forty-four. Serious injuries, numbered twenty-eight, and 119 people are missing… Well? Do you have anything to say?”

“It went according to the plan. There’s neither regret nor a thing to reflect on.”

“Haa～～～”

Inside the Adventurer Guild’s reception room, Ilwa was glaring at Hajime with a written report in hand. However, from hearing words without any hint of remorse to the figure of a little girl from the Sea-dweller tribe who was eating the tea cake while hitting on his laps made Ilwa felt completely exhausted.

“Although I thought it couldn’t be… I heard Lehman escaped from

Meerstat by destroying the water tank and walls, then flew to the sky… It wasn't not your doing, right?"

"… Myuu, this is delicious, too, you know? Try eating it."

"Ah~n."

Although Hajime calmly fed Myuu the cake, Ilwa didn't missed Shia, who was sitting beside him, wavering for a moment. Thus, he once again let out a very , very deep sigh. He rubbed his stomach with a hand, and the head secretary, Datt, casually handed him some stomach medication.

"Well, I won't deny that I felt you overdid it, however, we are also troubled by the underground organization… So I can honestly say you helped us in this matter. They always cleared any evidence, with their outward appearance being a legitimate company, and they could just cut off arrested the ones like a lizard's tail… Frankly, their extermination was a dream for us… But with the balance of the underground world collapsing… Haa, it will need serious cooperation between the Security Bureau and the Adventurers."

"Well, that originally should've been managed by Fhuren's Administrators. This matter only involved us because by some chance, someone wanted to put their hands on us so we counterattacked…"

"For a counterattack, how did it became annihilating one of three biggest underground organizations based in Fhuren in just half a

day? Seriously, I can't even joke about it."

Ilwa smiled bitterly and somehow looked like he aged for at least ten more years. Because Hajime felt he was pitiful, he make a proposal to Ilwa.

"We gave those criminal groups such a grand warning, making them think twice of ever trying to meddle with us again. Also, it's okay for Branch Head to use our names, you know? After all, if it's known that the Branch Head was the one who hired "Gold" ranks… It'll be a good deterrent, right?"

"Oya, is it really okay? It will surely become a big help… but aren't you the type who dislikes being used?

Ilwa's expression says he wasn't expecting Hajime's words. However, his eyes clearly said, "Eh? Seriously? Of course I will!" Hajime shrugged his shoulders and smiled wryly.

"Well, it is a give-and-take. We have troubled you, that's why I don't mind it if it's just that much. I also know you, the Branch Head, will use it with caution. Besides, Fhuren will be involved in a war between underground organizations because of us, and I feel bad to involve the ordinary people."

"… Hmm. Hajime-kun, aren't you changing slightly? When I first met you, I had a feeling you had no consideration for anyone beside your companions… Did something good happened in Ul?"

"… Well, at least it was not only bad things that happened there."

As expected of this big city's Guild Branch Head, he could clearly judged people. He was able to notice the slight change in Hajime. Since this change was also desirable for Ilwa, he gratefully accepted Hajime's proposal

Later on, although the two organizations planned on raising their influences by taking advantage of Flithof's annihilation, it didn't become just a big when thanks you Ilwa's effective use of the names of Hajime's party similar to how adults would scare children by saying "Namahage will come~" But because of this, Hajime gained various nicknames such as "Right-hand man of Fhuren's Branch Head," "White-haired, eye-patch, blazing flame-user," and "Little girl-killer"… However, Hajime didn't know of it, and it's no big deal if he had no knowledge of it.

[T/N: Namahage is a demon-like being, portrayed by men wearing hefty orge masks and traditional straw capes during a New Year's ritual.]

In regards to dealing with Hajime's party who caused such a grand rampage, thanks to Ilwa's effort, connections, and the unexpected help from the Security Bureau who defends the public peace, it became a legitimate case of self-defence. Thus, there was no problem at all. Apparently, even for the Security Bureau, the case where a child they were entrusted with was kidnapped, along with the bombing of one of their office, had become quite a hit on the head.

In addition, they could not tolerate the underground organization which kept doing illegal acts while making a mockery of them. The bureau director came to greet Hajime's party with truly manly

smile to conclude all things, and when he left, somehow his steps were light as though it was humming, “La dida dida.”

“Next, about Myuu-kun…”

Ilwa turned his gaze towards Myuu who was munching a cookie she held with both hands like a squirrel. Myuu twitched because of his gaze, uneasily looking up at Hajime, Yue, and Shia due to not wanting to be separated again. The reason she didn’t look at Tio was… it was the elders’ role to prevent a child from seeing something harmful.

“She could be entrusted to us and be sent to Elisen according to the legal procedures, or she could be entrusted you to be returned in a form of a commission… Those two are the only ways. What will you choose?”

Hajime inclined his head and wondered if it was okay not to entrust the kidnapped child of Sea-dweller tribe to the officials. According to Ilwa’s explanation, it would be okay to leave her to them because from the beginning, the “Gold”s’ rampage was to protect her, Myuu.

“Hajime-san… I, will, absolutely protect this child. That’s why, let her come with us… please.”

Shia bowed her head to Hajime. By all means she wanted to be together with Myuu until she was safely returned. Yue and Tio was watching Hajime in silence, leaving the decision up to Hajime.

“Onii-chan… stay together… please?”

It was foul play to say, “Please?,” while sending an upward gaze from his own lap. More importantly, when he got Myuu back, he had already considered to take her along if she wished for it, so his decision had been made.

“Well, it would have been be a big help in beginning… But now, I hold her dear so I can’t just say something like goodbye.”

“Hajime-san!”

“Onii-chan!”

Shia and Myuu were elated and smiled widely. Although it was necessary to conquer the Great Dungeon in «Great Volcano» before they travel to «Seaside town, Elisen», Hajime decided to allow Myuu to accompany and determined in his mind, “Well, we’ll manage somehow.”

“However, Myuu. Can you stop calling me Onii-chan? It’s okay to just call me Hajime. What can I say, the way you call me make me itch.”

Because Myuu was hugging him in joy, Hajime said his demand while feeling half embarrassed. For an otaku to be called “Onii-

chan”… various things might happen.

Hajime’s demand made Myuu puzzled for a moment, but before long she nodded as though she understood it… and she answered with something completely different from what everyone had expected.

“… Papa.”

“… Wh-What? Sorry, Myuu. I seems I didn’t hear it correctly. Please say it again.”

“Papa.”

“… I-it must be that, right? A word that means “Onii-chan” or “Hajime” in Sea-dweller tribe’s language, right?”

“Ah-uh. Papa is papa.”

“Um, wait a sec.”

Hajime used his hand to massage his forehead and Shia timidly asked Myuu why she used the word “Papa” to call Hajime. Then…

“You know, Myuu doesn’t have a Papa… He had gone to where the

God is before Myuu was born… Ki-chan, Lu-chan, and Mi-chan have theirs but only Myuu doesn't… That's why Onii-chan is Papa."

"I somehow understand, but I want to tsukkomi your "that's why," Myuu. Please anything but Papa. I'm still only 17 years old, you know."

"No, it's Papa!"

"Okay. Then Onii-chan is okay! I don't want such an extravagance title, so stop with Papa!"

"Nooo!! Papa is Myuu's Papa—!"

Afterwards, he tried various things to get Myuu to stop calling him "Papa," but Myuu displayed unexpected stubbornness, even more than the time she called him Onii-chan, and as the result, it was not revoked. As such, he could do nothing but made her mother persuade her when they arrived in Elisen. Hajime's expression looked like he was suffering his greatest damage since the time he came out of the Abyss.

The the discussion with Ilwa was over, they returned to the inn, and a dispute broke out in regards to whom would be called "Mama" by Myuu, and for the time being, Tio who would become a bad influence to Myuum was rolling on the floor because Hajime had tied her. Naturally, she was excited by it…

In the end, she didn't want to call anyone "Mama" except her real Mama, so Yue, Shia, and even Tio settled with "Onee-chan."

Then at the night, everyone slept together in a kawa-no-ji style because Myuu wished for it. Once again problem occurred on who would sleep beside Myuu and across Hajime. However, the exhausted Hajime made Myuu sleep in between him and Yue. Shia was dissatisfied by this and threw a tantrum, but somehow she was able to sleep after she finished saying all of her complaints.

That day, the 17 years old Hajime became a Papa… and now the journey together with a child began!

* * *

Extra:

Yue : "… Hajime."

Hajime : "Nn? What is it, Yue?"

Yue : "… I want a child."

Hajime : "… (Sweat drips)."

Yue : “… Jiii— (Silently appealing with her eyes).”

Hajime : “… Someday.”

Yue : “Nn!”

Shia : “That’s~, Hajime san… me, too (Fidget, fidget).”

Hajime : “… I won’t.”

Tio : “Master, this o— ”

Hajime: “Only those existing can joke around”

Tio : “… Haa, haa. Only this one got an immediate reply… Moreover, a merciless one… Haa, haa… I can’t hold it anymore!”

Arifureta: Volume 7 Chapter 10

Chapter 70 of the Web Novel.

An Abnormal Situation

Intense weapons clashing, and explosion sounds rang out inside the dim underground dungeon, with only a faint green light to rely upon.

It was so intense that it could be described as severe, and even the far distant wall shook from time to time. Numerous silver-colored sword trails were beautifully drawn in the empty space. Flame bullets, flame spears, wind blades, and water lasers flew about like a barrage. Sound of something hitting tough flesh, angry roars for their companions, and war cries filled the should be silent space suddenly turning into a battlefield.

“O light cutting through all creation, wind bring forth destruction, scatters and dances around like a whirlpool, and become the storm of light that cut my enemies! Soaring Severation!”

The Holy Sword he had in his hand, along with his wrist blurring as they accelerated, and numerous swords of light released with him, Kouki, as the core. The attacking bat-like demonic beast with the length of about 50 centimeters was instantly cut into ten pieces, and fell into the ground without being able to successfully attack as its blood splattered.

“Vanguard! Counting, ten—!”

“”””Roger!”””””

Ant-like demonic beasts that moved their jaws, bat-like flying demonic beasts, and sea anemone-like demonic beasts with numerous wriggling tentacles; hey wriggled and moved around inside the 30 meters in diameter round shaped room. The demonic beasts were coming from the eight tunnels all around the room.

This place was «Orcus Great Dungeon» 89th floor. The vanguards, Kouki, Ryuutarou, Shizuku, Nagayama, Hiyama, and Kondou, were matching the countdown timing of the rear guard’s all out magic attack. The demonic beasts, which managed to attack the rear guards, were repelled and defeated by Kouki and the vanguards as they wait for the countdown.

The troublesome bat-like flying demonic beasts rushed to attack the rear guards using the space between the vanguards’ defense, but were stopped thanks to rampart made by the reliable “Barrier-user.”

“O’ ephemeral storm, O’ invisible shield; rage, blow, swirl, and stop everything, “Wall of Furious Tempest”!”

Taniguchi Suzu activated the offensive defense magic. The chanted spell went right before the rearguards, and breeze could be felt by their outstretched hands. No change could be seen with naked eyes. Even the bat-like demonic beasts didn’t notice its presence, and were not alarmed by their instinct. They kept trying to attack the rear-guards who were about to activate large-scale attack magic spells.

However, before they reached, what met the charging demonic beasts was a wall of air that looked like a huge distortion of space appearing all of a sudden. Tens of those bat-like demonic beasts collided against the wall one after another, but the wall of air only bent without letting even one through.

When all of the charging bat-like demonic beasts had collided, the distorted space exploded, causing great impact as if it had reached its limit. The generated impact was tremendous, and the fleshes crushed by it immediately splattered on the dungeon's walls with sound of raw and death. Splatter!

"Hmph! I won't let you pass that easily!"

The voice of the class's mood-maker, Suzu, rang in the middle of the intense sound of battle. At the same time, the rear guards simultaneously fired their best attacks. It was an attack where it was necessary for them to be at a distance, since it would defeat the enemies, and struck all those who are close to it.

"Retreat!" With Kouki's order, the vanguards immediately backed away from the demonic beasts.

In the next moment, the magic attacks of six people arrived with such perfect timing.

A huge fireball crashed and simultaneously caused a huge explosion. Meanwhile, a tornado trampled the battlefield, bringing

forth vacuum blades which sucked the demonic beasts and cut them up. On the ground, stone spears shot off with tremendous speed and pierced the demonic beasts' lower parts. At the same time, the icicles falling from above created holes in the demonic beasts' upper bodies.

There was no way a living thing would be able to survive inside the sublime space that looked like it was receiving the wrath of nature. The attacks only last for tens of seconds. However, more than 90% of the demonic beasts were dead while the rest were on verge of dying due to grave injuries.

"Alright! This is good! Let's finish the leftover ones quickly!"

With Kouki's shout, the vanguards once again went forwards, and the demonic beasts on the brink of death, couldn't even fight back thanks to the all-out magic attacks, were finished one by one. Not even five minutes had passed when all of the demonic beasts were annihilated.

The battle ended, but Kouki's party didn't relax their guards and searched their surroundings to see if there were more enemies.

"Phew, next is the 90th floor, huh… We were able to defeat the demonic beasts in this floor without much difficulty… and it looks like the end of the combat training inside this dungeon is near."

"That's why; don't let your guard down. After all, we don't know what kind of demonic beasts and traps are ahead."

“Aren’t you worrying too much about it, Shizuku? Didn’t we just an easy battle in a floor no one ever reached? No matter what may come, I will defeat them! Even if it’s the Demon race!”

Shizuku cautioned Kouki, who muttered so in deep thought, and the muscle headed Ryuutarou replied with a hearty laugh. Nevertheless, Kouki made fist-to-fist greeting with Ryuutarou, and revealed a fearless smile. Seeing them, Shizuku sighed while rubbing her creased forehead. She came and had followed the extremeness of the two, which ascended her to a stage of a wordly-wise man. My wrinkle hasn’t increased again, right?, was her worry as the number of times Shizuku looked in a mirror had sublimely increased. Even so, she didn’t restrict the two as she followed them; truly a good natured person.

* * *

“Hiyama-kun, Kondou-kun, I think you must have recovered by now. But… how are you?”

While the others were discussing the earlier battle, Kaori was doing her duty; to heal the injured people from previous battle, since she was a “Healer.” It should be noted that there was another girl with “Healer” class within the 15 people who had undergone combat training by conquering the dungeon, and the duty to heal was divided between the two.

“… Aah, there’s no problem now. Thank you, Shirasaki.”

“O-Oh, it’s okay now. Thanks.”

Himaya, who was healed by Kaori, was daydreaming due to the close proximity of Kaori’s face, and answered absentmindedly. It was obvious he was charmed by her. Even Kondou was saying his gratitude with his reddened ears. Because they were the vanguards, Hiyama and Kondou were frequently in care of Kaori’s healing, and yet they still could not get used to coming in contact with Kaori. Although Kondou’s attitude was just like a child in puberty… there was darkness inside Hiyama’s eyes when he looked at Kaori. The darkness became thicker as days go by… but almost no one noticed it.

Hearing their gratitude, Kaori said, “You’re welcome,” with a smile. Then, she stood and turned around. When she confirmed no one else was in need of healing, she secretly sighed, and she began to look at the dim passage ahead with eyes filled with anxiety.

“…”

Noticing Kaori’s state, Shizuku understood what her best friend felt. Kaori’s mind was filled with worries. There were ten more floors until the lowest floor (the general opinion), yet they didn’t find any sign of Hajime at all.

Although it meant there was hope, the despair was far stronger. Even if she decided to not believe Hajime was dead until she saw it herself, another floor was conquered, and the negative thoughts that surged when nothing was found, could not be easily put aside. Furthermore, four months had passed since the day Hajime fell into the abyss. Even if her determination was strong, it was enough time for negative thoughts to begin invading her mind.

Seeing Kaori's appearance while she embraced her artifact, a white staff, tightly, Shizuku called out to her since she could no longer endure it. And, before Shizuku moved, the small mood-maker said, As if I will let Kaori keep worrying like that!, and ran towards her. Bounce, she jumped and embraced Kaori from behind.

"KA-O-RI~N!! There's no need to heal those guys, just heal Suzu a, lot~! Heal me with this and that~"

"Hya! Suzu-chan! Where are you touching! Rather, Suzu-chan should not have any injury!"

"There is! Suzu's glass-like heart is injured! That's why, spoil me! To put it concretely, use Kaorin's big breasts!"

"B-Brea—… I said stop! Ah, hey! Yanh! Shizuku-chan, help!"

"Haa, Haa, is this good? How about over here? Young lady, you are quite th-puuutt!?"

"… Haa, stop it already, Suzu. I know you don't mind the boys' gaze… But, you should…"

Suzu had transformed into a perverted old man and was groping Kaori's breasts with an expression so sloppy that it couldn't be shown to other human. It was the reason why she received a head

chop from Shizuku, and collapsed. Incidentally, some of the guys who watched Suzu and Kaori's yuri scene had also collapsed. Suzu was convulsing with lump on her head, and was looked after by Nakamura Eri with a wry smile.

"Uu~, thank you, Shizuku-chan. That was embarrassing…"

"Alright, alright. It is okay now. I have exterminated the pervert, okay?"

Kaori, who clung to her with teary eyes, was gently patted by Shizuku. It was scene that could often be seen recently. Shizuku took a look at Kaori's complexion while she gently stroked Kaori's silky hair. Kaori was looking at Eri who was looking after Suzu with troubled but somewhat happy expression, and her anxiety from before was no longer there. Apparently, her feeling had changed even if it was a temporary thing. One way or another, Shizuku felt admiration in her mind as she thought, As expected of the class's moodmaker, Suzu (Oldman version).

"There are only ten floors left… Let's do our best, Kaori."

Shizuku put her hands on Kaori's shoulders, and then put some strength into them as she looked straight at Kaori. It was her way to encourage her best friend, so she would not break. Seeing Shizuku, Kaori noticed she had become slightly more timid, so she slapped both of her cheeks and returned Shizuku's gaze with a powerful gaze.

"Un. Thank you, Shizuku-chan."

Shizuku's worry made Kaori realized again how much Shizuku would support her, and Kaori conveyed her gratitude as her gaze softened as she smiled. Shizuku quietly nodded, and her gaze also softened… Lily flowers were blooming on their sides, but they didn't notice it. Kouki and others who were looking around awkwardly were also unnoticed by Shizuku and Kaori. They were already in their own world after all.

"If it is now… can I protect him?"

"I see… I am sure you can. We are different from that time… Even our levels have surpassed Meld-san and the other Knights… However, hehe, isn't it possible that he has also became stronger? Even that time, he was the one who helped us in the end."

"Haha, jeez… Shizuku-chan…"

Kaori believed in Hajime's survival, but she was looking down on her current self, wondering if she could protect him this time, and that's why Shizuku was poking fun at her as a joke. Actually, they would be dumbfounded for various reasons when they found their target… But that is something for the near future.

Incidentally, the ones here were Kouki, Ryuutarou, Shizuku, Kaori, Suzu, Eri, five people including Nagayama Juugo, and Hiyama's gang of four; a total of 15 people, while Meld and the Knights were standing by at 70th floor. Actually, they were able to start from the 70th floor, since a teleport magic circle that connected 30th and 70th floor was discovered. Though it became easier to move to the lower floor, 70th floor was the limit for Meld and the Knights. To

begin with, there were only Meld and few others who could keep up while accompanied by Kouki's party when they were around the 60th floor. Thus, they had only become a hindrance to Kouki's party when they reached 70th floor.

Even Meld was conscious of that. He taught Kouki's party of all the know-how about the dungeon. That's why, he and the Knights decided to try their best to secure a safety zone around the teleportation circle, and only Kouki's party were to move on.

Meld wanted to show a bitter smile due to being exceeded in only four months. But even so, after associating with Kouki's party, he and the Knights were satisfied if their abilities could safely secure a safety zone in 70th floor.

Kouki's party current statuses were something like the following:

Name			
Kouki			
Level			
Class			
Strength			
Resistance			
Magic Resistance			
Skills			

- All Elements Aptitude
  - Rise in Light Element's Effectiveness
  - Activation Speed Increase
- All Elements Resistance
  - Rise in Light Element's Effectiveness

- Physical Resistance
    - Recovery Rate Increase
    - Mitigation of Impact
- Composite Magic
- Swordsmanship
- Herculean Strength
- Ground Shrinker
- Prediction
- High Speed Magic Power Recovery
- Sign Perception
- Magic Perception
- Limit Break
- Language Comprehension

Name	Nagara Old Ryuutarou		
Age	72		
Level	1		
Class	Fists Fighter		
Strength	370		
Stamina	880		
Agility	880		
Magic Resistance	240		
Skills			

- Hand-to-Hand Fighting Techniques
    - Body Strengthening
    - Part Strengthening
    - Concentrated Strengthening
    - Penetrate and Destroy
- Ground Shrinker
- Physical Resistance
    - Varja
- All Element Resistance
- Language Comprehension

Name	Yayoi Shizuku
Gender	Female
Class	Swordswoman
Strength	360
Agility	310
Magic Resistance	380

Skills

- Swordsmanship
  - Rise in Slashing Speed
  - Rise in Sword Drawing Speed
- Ground Shrinker
  - Great Ground Shrinker
  - Quivering Legs
  - No Beat
- Prediction
- Sign Perception
- Stealth
  - Phantom Attack
- Language Comprehension

Name	Yayoi Shizuku
Gender	Female
Class	Healer
Strength	360
Agility	310
Magic Resistance	380

Skills

- Healing Magic
  - Increase in Effectiveness
  - Increase Healing Rate

- Increase Imaginative Ability
- Permeation Detection
- Increase Effective Range
- Increase in Effectiveness of Distance Healing
- Increase in Effectiveness of Abnormal State Recovery
- Decrease in Magic Consumption
- Increase in Magic Power Efficiency
- Continuous Activation
- Simultaneous Activation
- Delayed Activation
- Additional Activation

• Light Element Aptitude

- Increase in Activation Speed
- Increase Effectiveness
- Increase Duration
- Continuous Activation
- Simultaneous Activation
- Delayed Activation

• High Speed Magic Power Recovery

- Meditation

• Language Comprehension

Kaori's Healing Magic and Light Element Aptitude skills were at the extreme. Her healing magic in particular was in the highest rank possible. Just judging by the amount of skills, Kaori's was at least amounted to four people. Furthermore, her current number of skills even exceeded the Hero, Kouki. With tit for tat, everything was definitely for her promise. Believing in his survival, this time, she would be the one to protect him. It was the result of her single-mindedly repeated the things she could do while spared little time for sleep.

“I think it’s about the time to leave… Is it okay now?”

Kouki timidly called out to Kaori and Shizuku, who were still looking at each other. Before, he had witnessed Kaori and Shizuku embracing each other in Kaori’s room, so sometimes Kouki’s attitude became suspicious, which had taken Kaori aback, but Shizuku knew what was in his mind and only quietly watched him. Her eyes were truly expressing, “Until when are you going to keep this strange misunderstanding, you fool.”

Pretending he didn’t notice Shizuku’s gaze, Kouki ordered the other members. They had explored 90% of the 89th floor, and the route they were to go now was the last place to explore. Thinking about the structure of the floors up until now, it was about time for them to see the stairs.

The prediction turned out right, and the party discovered the stairs 10 minutes after they moved out. They descended the dim, spiral staircase while confirming the existence of trap. After they descended for around 10 meters, Kouki’s party arrived at the 90th floor.

For now, Kouki’s party were looking in vigilance for anything that might happen since it was the starting point. However, just by its external appearance, nothing had changed from 80th-ish floors they had just finished exploring. They immediately began their exploration while mapping. Even if the structure was the same, but they could not let their guard down because the demonic beasts that would appear might be strong ones.

In vigilance, Kouki’s party explored the passages and rooms with the same structure as before. The exploration progressed easily. Or

so it should be, because before long, one by one they made doubtful expressions.

"…What's with this?"

By the time the party reached a deep inside broad space, the incomprehensible feeling reached its peak, and Kouki leaked a questioning voice with a perplexed expression. The other members were also perplexed just like him, so they halted when Kouki asked the question.

"… Even though we have explored it so much, why we didn't encounter even one demonic beast?"

Their exploration had reached the latter half part, excluding the unneeded passages. Up until now, they would not have been able to advance this easily since they were furiously attacked by strong demonic beasts. Normally, they needed two days to reach the latter half of a floor. However, not even three hours had passed since Kouki's party started exploring the 90th floor. The reason for this progress was simple. They didn't encounter even one demonic beast in this floor.

In the beginning, they thought the demonic beasts were observing Kouki's party from the shadows, but nothing popped up even when they used their perception skills and magic spells. It was strange for them not even feel the presence of a single demonic beast. It was obviously an abnormal situation.

"…How to say it, it feels eerie. Was nothing here since the

beginning?”

Similar to Ryuutarou, the other members also talked about the other possibilities which remain unsolved. Their confusion only deepened.

“… Kouki, shouldn’t we return for now? Somehow I feel an ominous premonition. Meld and Knights might know something about this situation.”

Shizuku suggested to Kouki while she strengthened her vigilance. Kouki considered Shizuku’s suggestion because he also had a bad feeling about it, but they must keep advancing no matter what happens, and he thought they would be fine because they could take it easy in the 89th floor, so he hesitated on answering.

While Kouki was hesitating, the party members who explored the nearby surroundings unexpectedly raised their voice when they found something.

“This is… blood…, right?”

“It is hard to discern since the blood assimilate with the color of dim wall… They are all over the wall.”

“Oi, oi… this… this is quite the amount.”

Nagayama advanced from within the paled party members, and he touched the liquid they thought as blood with his finger. Afterwards, he confirmed the details by looking and smelling the blood stuck on his finger.

“Amanogawa… we should follow Yaegashi’s suggestion… This is demonic beast’s blood. Furthermore, it still fresh.”

“Well, if that is demonic beast’s blood, it means the demonic beasts around her have all been killed. Not only that, it also means there’s strong one who did it… But, won’t we be unable to advance unless we defeat it?”

Nagayama shook his head towards Kouki’s rebuttal. Even though Nagayama was the second biggest after Ryuutarou, he had a very prudent character unlike the other one. Nagayama watched the surrounding carefully while being prepared for battle, and told Kouki what he thought about the situation.

“Amanogawa… the demonic beast is likely not to go out of this room alone. We also haven’t even encountered one in the passages and rooms up until now. In addition, it is the first time we discovered traces. In other words…”

“… Something must have hidden the traces of the attacked demonic beasts, right?”

Nagayama nodded at Shizuku’s words. Even Kouki’s expression showed he realized something because of those words. Then, just like Nagayama, he raised his vigilance to the maximum with a

stern expression.

“There’s also the possibility of demonic beasts becoming more intelligent… But, it was natural to think someone was here… In addition, for only traces in this room not to be hidden, either it means it didn’t have the time to do it, or…”

“Here is the last stop.”

What succeeded Kouki’s words was a never heard before voice of a woman suddenly ringing out. It was a man-like husky voice. Kouki’s party became pop-eyed, and they immediately entered battle state. They turned their gazes towards the source of the voice.

Sound of footsteps resounded, but what appeared from deep within the darkness of the spacious hall was a young woman with blazing red hair. The woman’s ears were slightly pointed, and her skin was darkish.

Kouki’s party opened their eyes wide in astonishment. The woman’s features were something they know very well. Though they have never seen it before, it was a race’s characteristics that always appeared inside the lecture from Ishtal and the others — the enemy of the Church of Saints’ God, and also the arch-enemy of human race. It was…

“…Demon race.”

Someone muttered, and the woman from Demon race revealed a faint, cold smile.

Arifureta: Volume 8 Chapter 1

Chapter 71 of the Web Novel.

Versus Demon race I

The red-haired woman of the Demon race who appeared before Kouki's party revealed a cold smile as she looked at Kouki's party who had widened eyes with surprise.

Similar to her hair, the color of her eyes were also red, and she wore a dull-black rider suit-like clothing. Its design was fitting to her body, so her splendid curves could be seen well even in the dim dungeon. Moreover, there was the opening on the chest area, where the splendid twin hills seemed like it was going to spill out at any time. Furthermore, her flowing hair behind her, and her characteristically slightly pointed ears was truly captivating. Most of the male students were blushing even though they know it wasn't the right time.

"You are the hero, right? Yes, you, the one wearing a stupidly sparkling armor."

"St-Stupid… sh-shut up! I won't accept being called stupid by someone from Demon race! Besides, why would a person from the Demon race be in a place like this!?"

Kouki spoke without thinking, and used his slight anger to recover from his surprise, questioning the purpose of the woman of the

Demon race.

However, the Demon race woman thought of Kouki's question as annoying and ignored it. Then, she very reluctantly continued saying.

"Haa~ Even though this is absolutely unneeded… Well, this is an order after all… You, I mean the overly sparkling one. Won't you come to our side?"

"Wh-What did you say? Come to your… what do you mean!?"

"Looks like your comprehensive ability is rather low. The meaning is exactly as I said. An invitation for Mr. Hero. I want you to come to our side. There are various preferential treatments, too, you know?"

Time was needed for Kouki's party to completely understand the unexpected words. Then, the classmates looked at Kouki, who glared at the woman from Demon race with strained and disgusted expression. It was then when they understood what she meant.

"I refuse! How dare you… asking me to betray… Human race… my comrades and the people of this Kingdom! It's exactly as I heard; the Demon race is an evil existence! You purposely came her to invite me, but for you to come alone is too foolish! We have the numbers. So, surrender now!"

Kouki's words made the other classmates felt at ease. They thought Kouki would definitely refuse it, but they could not deny that they were slightly worried about it. However, his childhood friends, Ryuutarou and Shizuku, didn't even worry about it.

On the other side, the woman of the Demon race didn't even pay any attention to the immediate refusal, and she muttered, "I see." In fact, when Kouki's shouted his reply, it annoyed her.

"Well, my superior also said it was okay for your comrades to come with you, you know? So how about it?"

"My answer is still the same! No matter what you say, I absolutely won't betray Human race!"

Without discussing with his comrades, the representative, Kouki, immediately answered as such. And as though implying the invitation was something unpleasant, Kouki activated the Holy Sword, which then became cladded in light. There's no more need for discussion, and I will use force if you don't surrender!

Behind him, Nagayama and Shizuku clicked their tongues in secret as they took maximum precaution to their surroundings over the Demon race woman. Considering their situation, the two contemplated to change the location even if they must lie to the Demon race woman. However, Kouki had already answered in anger before they could bring up their idea. Since it could not be helped now, they prepared for anything unexpected to happen.

But if they thought about it, normally, no matter how adept the

Demon race were in using magic, they would not come to such a place alone. It was even more unbelievable that she flawlessly manage to annihilate the demonic beasts in the current floor, in addition to not leaving a single trace. If the Demon race was so strong, and she was able to achieve all that, then they would have already trampled the Human race by now.

Besides, the Demon race woman didn't even break a sweat when she reached this floor ahead of the 15 humans. Thinking of how she concealed the signs of combat, it made one fear thinking something laid in wait since they step into the floor, and one would think she had the geographical advantage. It would not be strange if something happen.

The crisis the two had sensed was immediately proven to be correct.

"I see. Then, I won't ask any more. Also let me say this… to invite you is not my main priority, so don't even think of something naive like I won't kill you. Lutos, Havell, Enki. It's time to eat!"

The Demon race woman called out three names and, CRAAASH! Sound of something crushed echoed along with Shizuku and Nagayama's anguished voices when they were blown away at the same time.

"Guh!?"

"Gah!?"

It was not known what blew the two away. With the order of the woman of the Demon race, they sensed the left and right spaces of Kouki's party suddenly blurred. There were "existences" approaching them with speed comparable to "Ground Shrinker," and attacked the unprepared classmates who were watching the conversation between Kouki and the woman of the Demon race.

Even with Shizuku and Nagayama's maximum precaution from the very beginning, they were barely able to notice the surprise attack, and they stood to protect the students who were suddenly the aim of their invisible enemy.

Shizuku was a speedfighter, so her defense is low. Therefore, she drew her swords into a cross towards the blurring space, and tried to jump back to dull the force when she received the impact. However, the enemy's attack power was far greater than she had imagined, so her defense was broken, and she was thrown to the ground, sucking all the air in her lungs. There was even shallow cut on her abdomen.

Nagayama was a "Great Martial Artist," which owned special aptitude towards defense even among hand-to-hand fighter class. He had acquired the skill derived from "Body Strengthening" called "Body Hardening," which was similar to "Vajra," and both skills had great credibility as they were far stronger than a steel shield. Coupled by his huge figure, his hard to break through defend made him suitable to be called a human fortress.

However, even Nagayama had his defense broken through by that "existence," and was blown away while splattering blood from his deeply wounded arms. He barely escaped the additional damage of crashing into the ground by chance, and landed on Hiyama's gang who was in the rear.

The glass cracking-like crushed sounds came from the barrier magic Suzu had chanted beforehand; similar to how Shizuku took maximum caution. It was something she did immediately when she instinctively sensed the crisis. The location was at the rear side of the party. She didn't feel the "existences" there, but she somehow used the barrier to not only envelop Shizuku and Nagayama, but also everyone on the rear. It was something she did instinctively which could also be said that it was due to her experience. Her action was extremely correct. Without Suzu's barrier, the third blurred space would mercilessly cut up Nagayama and other party members.

However, Suzu was immediately blown backward as compensation of splendidly protecting her allies because she directly received the impact from the crushed barrier. Fortunately, Eri was right behind her and she successfully caught Suzu, but the crisis had not ended yet, when the third blurring space immediately began to move in pursuit just like the other two blurring spaces, wounding Shizuku and Nagayama.

Because of the suddenness, those classmates who could not react towards the three approaching blurred spaces… at that moment,

"Give the grace and divine protection of light to us! "Heavenly Time," "Heavenly Perimeter," "Heaven Interruption!"."

Kaori activated three light magic at the same time with almost no chanting; she was able to omit some of her chants.

The first magic spell was a mid-rank recovery magic, which

immediately healed Shizuku and Nagayama, who were wounded, blown away, and landed on the ground. It was a magic spell capable of healing more than two people remotely away from her. Faint white lights poured on the two people who somehow managed to stand up while groaning because of the pain; their wound recovery rate was abnormal.

The second spell was used to allow Suzu and the others to be unnoticable by the three blurred spaces. Similar faint white light poured into them. The light buoyantly expanded, and an area of light appeared at where they were at.

“Heavenly Perimeter” was a mid-ranked recovery magic, and it was the so called auto-regen. Although the duration was long, the amount recovered was little at a time. It had the feature of wrapping the surrounding with light made of magic power while the magic was activated. Kaori was using that feature, and the recovered amount was set to the lowest to indirectly reveal the appearances of the unknown enemies.

What appeared inside the white light were strange demonic beasts with lion head, dragon-like limbs, sharp claws, snake as the tails, and eagle-like wings on their backs — the so called Chimera. They must have peculiar magic for camouflaging. It was a quite troublesome ability, since not only were their appearances camouflaged, their presences as well. However, the fact that they could not exhibit their full power in that state, and thus the blurred spaces, was a blessing in the midst of misfortunes.

After all, even Shizuku and Nagayama who held the best combat prowess among the classmates were incapacitated with only a blow. They were enemies to be feared. Their powers were completely far above the demonic beasts the students had met on

the previous floors, and obviously even stronger than the demonic beasts in this floor.

The three Chimeras readied their claws and fangs in pursuit as though they knew the location even inside the light. Their targets were Shizuku, Nagayama, and Suzu, these three. However, their fangs and claws could not reach the three, since three shields of light appeared before each of them and the attacks were averted in a hair's breadth, and the angle slightly moved while the shields were crushed by the Chimeras' attacks.

They were the mid-ranked defense spell, "Heaven's Interruption." It was the higher ranking version of the beginner-ranked light defensive magic, "Light's Interruption," where more than two shields produced at the same time. Even the "Barrier-user," Suzu was using this magic, and by replenishing the destroyed edges of the shield in high-speed, it was possible to stall time though it'd soon to be destroyed when weakened. In this respect, Kaori could not reached Suzu whose specialty was barrier, since she could not use it like such as even when her aptitude towards light element is high. At best, she could only do minute adjustments to the shield.

However, the shields were helpful. At the moment Suzu's strong barrier was destroyed in a blow, Kaori realized her barrier would be useless, so she chose a method to avert the attack. To begin with, she didn't expect the incoming attacks would be the same as before, so it was more like a sink or swim situation. She was lucky it went well.

The three Chimeras whose attacks were averted, became irritated and moved to attack again. The time she gained was only a moment. It was as though the Chimeras didn't find it troublesome. However, there was no change that the most expensive thing to

buy was time, even if it was just a moment. Kouki and the others didn't miss that moment.

"Get away from Shizukuuuu!!"

So, is it okay to attack Nagayama?, No one said just a sentence. Perhaps because of anger, Kouki roared and used "Ground Shrinker" to immediately reached the Chimera near Shizuku. Kouki's movement speed was so fast that he left after images. He swung his Holy Sword towards the Chimera's neck, and the sword became shinier.

At the same time, Ryuutarou took on the Chimera that went to attack Nagayama with his thrusted fist in a karate stance. Rather than a direct attack, he thought it'd be faster to attack using the gauntlet-type artifact's ability, shock wave. A war cry came from Ryuutarou and magic power was supplied to the gauntlet.

Furthermore, Eri, who caught the blown away Suzu, thrusted her hand out, began to chant when she felt the same crisis as Suzu, and powerful fire magic was activated. It was a mid-ranked magic called "Sea of Flame," and just like the name, it was a ranged magic that manipulated tidal waves of flame. Even agile enemy would not be able to easily avoid it.

With sublime power and speed, Kouki swung the Holy Sword down from an upper stance. While Ryuutarou's thrusted fist drew out a form that couldn't even be more splendid and resulted in a violent shock wave that went forward just like a cannonball. Eri's deathbringer, crimson tidal wave surged to swallow its target, turning it into ashes and dusts.

However…

“”ROOOAAAR!!””

“GuUURawwwr!!”

Unbeknownst to them, some things had hidden themselves. Three shadows roared and attacked Kouki’s party right before their attacks would directly hit their targets.

“”Hmmmph!?””

The suddenness of this situation made Kouki and Ryuutarou felt chills running down their spines. Two of the shadow rushed towards Kouki and Ryuutarou with tremendous power, and the metal maces in their hands were swung with great speed.

Kouki immediately used the sword’s centrifugal force to twist his body while Ryuutarou raised his left hand towards the incoming mace instead of his thrusted out right hand. With his balance broken, Kouki rolled on the ground, and Ryuutarou was blown away by the enemy’s second attack, a punch, after he defended against the mace.

What attacked Kouki and Ryuutarou were demonic beasts with appearances similar to Brutal, with a height of 2.5 meters. However, even though they were similar to monsters in RPGs such as Orc and Ogre, the Brutals were like pigs while these demonic

beasts were considerably smart. Furthermore, their Brutal-like bodies were strengthened to their limits. In fact, the strength and speed from the previous surprise attack could not be compared to Brutals.

On the other side, even though Eri didn't receive any direct attack, the psychological impact she received was greater than Kouki and Ryuutarou's. Reason being, the shadow that suddenly appeared opened its mouth and begun to inhale the surging tidal waves at once. WoOOOoosh! The expansive flame gathered at a single point and disappeared. The shadow inhaled all of the flame in only tens of seconds.

What appeared in the space where the flame and heat disappeared was turtle-like demonic beast with six feet. The shell on its back was dyed in crimson, just like the rampaging flame that earlier changed its target to ashes.

In the next moment, the turtle with six feet finished absorbing the flame and once again opened its mouth wide. At the same time, the shell on its back shined intensely and red light appeared inside its opened mouth. It was just like how energy was collected before a laser beam was fired.

Seeing that, an impatient expression appeared on Eri's face; she had no room to spare since she had just fired her magic. However, her impatient was blown off by the usual cheerful voice of her best friend in her arms.

"Don't underestimate me! Come in succession o' light of protection and be revived as long as I have the will, "Heaven's Interruption"!"

In a moment, ten light shields appeared in succession before Suzu and Eri. All of the shields were set up diagonally at 45 degree angle. The super-high temperature beam was fired by the six-legged turtle at the same time the shields appeared, and parried upward through where the shields were crushed.

Even so, the power of the beam was greatly above the attack from the previous demonic beasts, since it only needed a moment to pulverize a shield. Suzu was gritting her teeth and chanted in succession to construct new shields one after another. It could be said it was as expected of a “Barrier-user,” the shield’s construction speed rivaled the speed of the shield’s destruction and succeeded in parrying the six-legged turtle’s beam, barely.

The parried beam hit the dungeon’s ceiling accompanied with great tremor, pulverizing its surroundings, and the scattered scorching minerals fell down like a rain.

“Damn it! What’s just happened!?”

“Just what are those demonic beasts!?”

“Shit, let’s defeat them now!”

Only until the situation progressed this much did Hiyama’s gang and Nagayama’s party slipped out of their confusion and prepared to fight. The wounded Shizuku and Nagayama were also healed completely, and they began to respectively attack the Chimeras.

Shizuku entered the super-high-speed world, and not even her after image could be seen. Voom! Her figure disappeared with a sound of exploded air, appearing right behind the Chimera in the next moment, and she used the sword drawing technique to unsheathe her swords that had returned to their sheaths before anyone noticed.

“No Beat,” it was a skill that enable movement without preliminary action. Rather than simply moving with speed without leaving any after images, one just could not catch up with her movement, which rapidly quicken and slowed. In addition, her sword drawing and slashing speed were further increased by the skills derived from Swordsmanship. The speed of the naked blades was even faster than what an ordinary living being would recognize as a swift flash.

To return the blow she received a while ago, she used one of the Yaegashi-style secret techniques, “Void Severing.” It cut even the space just like its name; at one moment one could see the silver-colored trajectory of the sword, and the Chimera’s snake tail was severed into two in the next moment.

“GURAaaaaWR!!”

Raising roar of anger, the Chimera turned around and swung its sharp claws. However, its attack only cut through the air; Shizuku had already moved to the other side. She swung her two swords, and cut the Chimera’s flank.

“Kuh!”

Shizuku used her speed to steadily damage the Chimera. However, Shizuku's expression didn't clear up, inadvertently leaking a sound as though she had been bitten a bitter bug. It was because her calculation had been wrong. In reality, Shizuku had wanted to cut the Chimera's body apart with the first strike, but she could not do that, and the snake tail entered her slashing range instead. Even the second slash that supposed to cut the Chimera's body in even halves were stopped when it quickly bent its body right before the slashes reached it.

The Chimera could not keep up with Shizuku's speed. However, it was not like it could not respond to her. It could not see her figure, so it was barely able to respond to Shizuku's extreme speed using its reflex speed; a truly troublesome opponent. It was something more than troublesome for Shizuku who wanted to finish the fight quickly and rescue the others.

Afterwards, she swung her swords for the third and fourth times, and though there were numerous wounds on the Chimera's body, they were too shallow to become a mortal wound. In addition, the Chimera began to become accustomed to Shizuku's speed. An impatient expression appeared on Shizuku's face.

The bad things continued for Shizuku, no for all of them.

"CAAAWWWW!!"

When she heard a shriek suddenly resounding around the room, dark red light wrapped the severed tail and wings before her, and the Chimera's wounds immediately healed. Kaori's "Heavenly

Perimeter"'s effect had been significantly lowered, and thus, wounds were not supposed to be healed easily no matter how shallow they were. Shizuku opened her eyes wide and looked at the source of the shriek, while she kept caution towards the healed Chimera.

Thus, unbeknownst to her, the Demon race woman who was standing idly like an unconcerned spectator had a double-headed white crow riding on her shoulder, with one head turned towards Shizuku. More accurately, it was facing the Chimera before Shizuku.

"There's even a healer!?"

She thought she finally wounded the difficult enemy, but it was immediately healed. Even at the best of times, lots of time would have passed before she could attain the victory. However, now, there was an excellent healer in stand by for the Chimera. Such a situation made Shizuku screamed instinctively.

Not only Shizuku, her comrades at the other places similarly raised bitter screams.

Kouki, who fought the Brutal-look-alike while receiving support, had almost finished after he deeply cut the Brutal-like body from shoulder to the waist, but the crow's other head was looking at the wound, and when it shrieked, it was healed as though time had rewinded.

The same thing happened to Ryuutarou and Nagayama. The second

Brutal-look-alike Ryuutarou was fighting had its abdomen hollowed out as though it had exploded, and one of its arm was broken. However, it was immediately healed when the head that was looking at the Chimera Shizuku was fighting against, turned towards it and shrieked. Even the Chimera Nagayama had battled against that had parts of its body caved in was immediately healed.

“Looks like you have quite the hard time. What will you do? Will you come to our side now? If it is now, I will let you think for a while, you know?”

Seeing Kouki’s party having a hard fight, the woman of the Demon race clapped her hands with composed attitude and once again spoke to invite them. To begin with, she asked the question knowing what the answer will be, and her expression remained cold. Her expectation turned to be right.

“Don’t joke around! We won’t yield to your threat! We won’t be defeated! And I will give you the proof! Here I go, “Limit Break”!”

The words of the woman of the Demon race made Kouki raised an expression of indignation. He used the Holy Sword to counter the Brutal-look-alike’s swung down mace, and used the chance to activate “Limit Break”.

Cladded in divine light, Kouki shouted this would be the end, and charged towards the woman of the Demon race.

Arifureta: Volume 8 Chapter 2

Chapter 72 of the Web Novel.

Versus Demon Race II

“Limit Break,” a skill that temporarily triples ones basic stats using magic power, however, it is literally breaking one’s limit; so, it cannot be used for a long period and the user will be weakened proportionally to the time it was use afterwards. That is because of the severe fatigue and results in the inability to use even half of one’s original power. Therefore, the time and place to use this last-resort skill should be thought out carefully.

Because of the demonic beast’s strength and recovery, Kouki judged that the morale of his companions would plummet if this kept up, so he used “Limit Break” to immediately defeat the White Crow and the Demon race woman.

With Kouki’s declaration of “Limit Break,” pure white light wrapped around his body. At the same time, the Brutal-look-alike, whose mace attack was counter attacked again, didn’t notice the change in Kouki.

“O’ blade-like will, bear the light and tear my enemy, “Light Sword”!”

Kouki bent his body forward to dodge the Brutal-look-alike's mace. He then immediately slashed from below using the Holy Sword which was extended by the blade of light.

He had slashed the enemy before by using "Light Sword," and although it received a severe wound, it wasn't life-threatening. However, this time he was using "Limit Break," which tripled his stats, and with the effect of "Light Sword," the Brutal-look-alike was diagonally cut in two, as though it was made of butter.

One beat later, the Brutal-look-alike's body shifted diagonally and boom!, it crumbled with a raw sound. Kouki put strength into his legs and immediately accelerated fiercely towards the Demon race woman.

Nothing obstructed the space between Kouki and the Demon race woman. Although it was said that the Demon race was a superior race in terms of magic, but it was too late for her to do anything. With this, she would be slashed along with the white crow, the end. Everyone thought so.

At that moment,

"""""""GUUURAAAAAARRRRRWW!!!"""""""

"Wha—!?"

There were six blurred spaces, and they attacked Kouki while

roaring loudly. Because the Chimeras were attacking simultaneously from all sides, Kouki instinctively raised an astonished voice and his eyes opened wide.

He immediately slammed the brake, dodging the attack from the front, and used Holy Sword to slash the Chimera attacking from his right. Next, he believed in the performance of the Holy Armor and endured the deadly attack he received on his back.

However, those were the only things he could do. The claws of the Chimera on his left hit his shoulder. He flew outside of the encirclement when the last Chimera suddenly jumped, dug its foreleg claws on Kouki's shoulders, and pinned him.

"Ack!!" A cry slipped through his grit his teeth.

He was barely able to stop the Chimera that was about to pierce its fangs in the scruff of his neck with Holy Sword. With claws digging into his shoulders, the power to block the jaws was reduced. Kouki who had already broken his limit was gradually cornered, and he could not bring forth enough power.

"O' light of grace, bring your healing and warning to this place, "Heavenly Burn"! "Binding Seal"!"

Seeing Kouki in such a pinch, Kaori promptly activated recovery magic spells. "Heavenly Burn" was a mid-ranked healing magic with a single target. Its effect was higher than the recovery magic, "Heavenly Time," she used earlier to heal several people. However, the Chimera's claws were digging in Kouki's shoulders, so it

wouldn't be healed the way things were going.

Therefore, she activated mid-ranked restraining magic of the light element, "Binding Seal," at the same time she activated the healing magic. "Binding Seal" was a magic that produced a cage of light centering on the confined object — Kaori used that magic on Kouki. The cage of light instantaneously expanded around Kouki and pushed the Chimera away.

With the claws coming out of his shoulders, "Heavenly Burn" demonstrated its effect and Kouki's wounds were instantly healed.

At the same time, some people from the rear, such as Suzu and the rear guard group who were fighting against the Chimera and the six-legged turtle, released attack magics towards the Chimeras attacking Kouki. However the distance was too far and they could not get a good aim, even when they had had the effects of Kaori's "Heavenly Perimeter," they were still unable to deal great damages to the Chimeras.

Even so, they were able to buy time for Kouki to regain his balance. Next, he readied his Holy Sword, chanted, and charged to counter attack when he was fully healed.

""Soaring Four Wing Blades""

He swung the Holy Sword which drew a curve in the air, and four slashes of light appeared from the space where he swung at. The targeted Chimeras sensed the crisis beheld by Kouki's action strengthened by "Limit Break," and immediately jumped away to

evade.

However,

“Capture them, “Restrain”!”

With a chantless-like short chant, Kaori activated mid-ranked restraining magic of the light element, “Restrain.” Numerous chains of light jumped out from the evading Chimeras’ feet and twined around their neck and feet. Though it was not difficult to get out of it with the strength the Chimeras possessed, they were stopped for a moment and could not evade.

As a result, the four Chimeras were directly hit by Kouki’s “Soaring Blade”s and died as their blood splattered around.

Kouki glared and pointed his Holy Sword towards the Demon race woman.

“How regrettable; your last resort was ineffective against us. Now there’s nothing else to protect you!”

Upon hearing Kouki’s words, the Demon race woman looked dubiously, no, looked at Kouki with amazement. In her mind, she thought, “Why was it necessary for him to declare that now? Wouldn’t it be better for him to immediately slash me?”

Even though the Demon race woman should have been cornered, her composed attitude irritated Kouki. First she let out Chimeras, next Brutal-look-alikes, and now Chimeras again. Those surprise attacks were also the source of his irritation. “You only used surprise attacks and didn’t fight fairly. Moreover, you’re just spectating. What a coward!” Kouki shouted.

“… Well, that’s not my last resort.”

“What a bluff!”

“Anyway, forget about whether or not it’s a bluff, but what will you do after you repel those? I have confirmed your power as the “Heretic Apostles,” so I have no more business with you.”

“What ar—”

“KYAAA!”

“— Kh!?”

The Demon race woman said while going through the trouble of flipping her hair, when a scream rang out from behind him the same time Kouki was questioning her.

Kouki reflexively looked back, and what greeted his eyes were five Brutal-look-alikes and Chimeras. Furthermore, there was a black, four-eyed wolf he had never seen before who was ridden by a 60

centimeter black cat with four tentacles. They simultaneously attacked his comrades and Kouki could see the spectacle where the black cat's tentacle pierced through the flank of one of his best friends in Nagayama's party, Nomura Kentarou. The one who screamed was Yoshino Mao, also from Nagayama's party.

"Kentarou! Damn you, don't you get carried away!"

"Mao, calm down! I will heal him!"

A member from their party, Endou Kousuke, slashed the tentacle that pierced Nomura and he glared at the black cat with eyes blazing in anger.

Nomura fell and raised an anguished voice, which made Yoshino dumbfounded, but only to be scolded by Tsuji Ayako who immediately activated healing magic. It was a blessing that she completed her chant completed before the tentacle cut by Endou healed up.

"Wh—, there are still more—!"

As he looked back, Kouki made a surprised sound because there were new reinforcements that appeared unbeknownst to him.

"The effect of Chimera's peculiar magic, "Camouflage," activates on whoever it touched. Or have you not thought of such a thing? Looks, there's more of them."

“Kh!?”

The large amount of demonic beasts that suddenly appeared had reversed the situation, and Kouki and his comrades were now the ones who were inferior in terms of numbers. Seeing that, Kouki hurriedly turned back. To Kouki, the Demon race woman gave away the secret of the Chimera’s “Camouflage” effect and further revealed more demonic beasts. Ten four-eyed wolves and black cats appeared from behind her and rushed towards Kouki.

“Kuh— oOO!”

The black cats’ tentacles extended at extraordinary speed and attacked Kouki from all directions. Kouki made a pinwheel rotation to cut the incoming tentacles using the Holy Sword, but one of the black cats had gotten close to his side and tried to hit him. It was aiming at Kouki’s face, so the jumping black cat shouldn’t have been able avoid his attack mid-air. Kouki said, “One down!,” when he was convinced of the demonic beast’s death.

However, his conviction was easily overturned in the next moment. Somehow, the black cat did a somersault in mid-air and avoided Kouki’s attack. Next, sharp claws that didn’t suit the cat’s physique targeted Kouki’s neck.

Kouki was barely able to move his head and avoided the attack, but he was unable to respond to a four-eyed wolf’s attack that came from behind him, due to the collapse of his balance. It didn’t result in a serious injury thanks to his defense of his armor and the strength from exceeding his limit. He then mightily jumped away

and returned to his comrades.

With that, the obviously abnormally strong demonic beasts surrounded Kouki's party. Everyone tried to fight back desperately, but what was even more troublesome was that the enemies had suddenly increased in numbers and were cooperating. In addition, the white crow would immediately heal the demonic beasts if they didn't die in one hit.

Although the frontline somehow managed to avoid collapsing, thanks to the continuous healing of Kaori and the other "Healer," Tsuji Ayako, they still could not do anything to break the situation.

Kouki dealt damage to the enemies using the power he gained from "Limit Break," but it had become impossible for him to attack the demonic beasts with "hit and run" tactic while cooperating with the others.

With high-speed movement comparable to Shizuku's "No Beat," the black cat and the four-eyed wolf that possessed a skill called "Prediction," had excellent teamwork which resulted in the evasion of what should have been a mortal wound.

They desperately fought back, but shadows of despair gradually began to loom over the expression of the classmates. That feeling grew larger thanks to the participation of the Demon race woman in the battle.

"The golden eyed lizard sleeping in the depth of the ground, the magic-eyed king born in this world, the one who brought the curse

of darkness within his view. What I seek is the eternal and everlasting prison of darkness. Neither terror, nor despair, nor sorrow, to lock out my enemies with those eyes, and what remains would be demise, only cold sanction sculptures. Crush everything and return them to the ground! “Final Prison”!”

Immediately after the chant was finished, a gray orb appeared from the woman of the Demon race’s outstretched hand and flew towards Kouki’s party drawing a parabola. Although it could not be called fast, there’s no one currently in Kouki’s party who could not evade it. At a glance, it was truly not a marvelous magic, but the one whose abdomen pierced by the tentacle, Nomura Kentarou, was already pale faced because of the blood loss, and became paler. He shouted,

“Kh!? Fuck! Taniguchi—!! Stop that thing! Use your barrier!”

“Eh!? R-Roger! Bring a sanctuary that won’t let the God’s enemy pass here! “Holy Interruption”!”

Nomura, who was at his wit’s end ordered, and Suzu used shortened chants to invoke high-ranked defense magic of the light element. The shining barrier created a dome-like state and surrounded Kouki’s party. Because “Holy Interruption” didn’t have a function to detect friend or foe, there were lots of demonic beasts wrapped inside the dome-like barrier. Not only was it a strong magic, it also had high magic power consumption rate. It was the reason why it was often not used in meaningless fights. However, Nomura’s shout told her the danger of the magic activated by the Demon race woman, so at the very least, she wanted to use a strong barrier magic and immediately chose “Holy Interruption.”

The gray-colored swirling orb immediately collided with the barrier right after Suzu expanded the “Holy Interruption.” The gray orb had tremendous pressure and strength belied by its appearance to break through the barrier. To not let it break through, Suzu gritted her teeth and desperately endured the feeling of her magic power being consumed.

Then, as if they received an order from the Demon race woman, the demonic beasts’ movements changed. Several all of them began to aim at Suzu simultaneously.

“Suzu!”

“Protect Taniguchi!”

Eri fired her magic to obstruct the approaching Brutal-look-alike as she called Suzu’s name. With Suzu in the center, there was Eri with Saitou Yoshiki and Kondou Reiichi fighting against a Chimera, and a four-eyed wolf in opposite of her. Nomura came to Suzu’s side.

However, a black cat suddenly appeared from the crack of their defense towards the unmoving Suzu who could not move while maintaining “Holy Interruption.” Nomura immediately activated “Stone Spear” and skew it to the ground. However, the black cat was zigzagging mid-air, bent its body to avoid the stone spear, and thrust out all of its tentacles.

“Taniguchii!”

“Agh!?”

Nomura called Suzu’s name to warn her, but it was too late. The tentacles had instantly pierced the Suzu’s stomach, thigh, and right arm while she tried to dodge. Her small body was caught and was thrown to the side with a strong force.

With splattered blood, Suzu’s back struck the ground and her breath hung. Then, she screamed due to the incapability to endure the severe pain the same time she regained her breath.

“AaAaAUGH!!”

“Suzu-chan!”

“Suzu!”

Hearing her agonized voice, Kaori and Eri instantly screamed Suzu’s name. Although Kaori tried to focus her mind to activate healing magic, but the shining barrier Suzu made had disappeared first.

“Everyone, get away from that orb!”

Nomura warned the others with a voice filled with frustration. However, up till now, no magic could rival Suzu’s impregnable defense, “Holy Interruption.” That was why his warning came too

slow.

With the disappearance of the barrier, the swirling grey orb flew mightily, crashed into the ground and exploded soundlessly, and scattered grey smoke to the surroundings tremendously.

Saitou, Kondou, and Nomura, ran towards Suzu who had collapsed in agony nearby. The grey smoke immediately wrapped around them. There were no shadows of demonic beasts. All of them had simultaneously distanced themselves at once.

The grey smoke continued to extend and tried to engulfed Kouki and the others.

“Come, O’ wind! “Wind Bomb”!”

Kouki immediately used wind magic to create a squall, which pushed the grey smoke outside the room.

Maybe because it was created with magic, the smoke didn’t easily get blown out of the room unlike ordinary smoke, but because Kouki’s magic was strengthened thanks to the “Limit Break,” he successfully blew the smoke away after some struggle, into the dungeon passageway.

However, what was left by the smoke was…

“That can’t be, Suzu!”

“Nomura-kun”

“Saitou! Kondou!”

Saitou and Kondou had completely petrified and became unable to speak, while Suzu had her lower half of her body petrified, and Nomura who covered Suzu had the left side of his body petrified.

Saitou and Kondou were petrified with dumbfounded expressions because they didn’t understand what had happened. Suzu whose lower half petrified, coupled with severe pain, had lost her consciousness with a truly pained expression.

On the other hand, the one who protected Suzu, Nomura, had the most negligible damage, but he still let out a pained groan while gritting his teeth looking like he seemed to be enduring an acute pain. Nomura’s damage was slight because he was an “Earth Magic-user.” Carrying the highest aptitude to earth attribute, it was natural he had high resistance against magic from Earth element.

In addition, Nomura instantaneously saw through the Demon race woman’s magic because it was of the Earth element, which he had studied — high-ranked offensive magic, “Final Prison.” It was a troublesome magic scattering petrifying grey smoke. Even if it was only a slight touch, the magic would gradually invade the body until one was completely petrified, and the only action to prevent it was to create barrier that’d hold up until the effect has worn off, or use strong magic to blow the smoke away. Moreover, the barrier

would also be petrified unless it was a high-ranked one, and the smoke could also only be blown away using a high-ranked magic.

“Bastard! How dare you!”

Kouki raised an enraged expression because of the disaster that fell upon his comrades. Kouki, who was wrapped in a shining light due to the effect of “Limit Break,” began to shine in a brighter dazzling light. He looked like he would charge towards the Demon race woman at any moment.

However, Shizuku acted as a stopper to Kouki when she yelled with an admonishing voice, followed by telling him to withdraw with all of their might.

“Stop! Kouki! Let’s withdraw! The path of retreat is clear now!”

“Wh—!? After what had happened, how can I run away?!”

However, with his fury from seeing his comrades getting hurt, Kouki glared and objected to Shizuku’s plan of retreating. The pressure Kouki released rushed towards Shizuku, but she received it as though it was nothing, and pressured him instead with a stern expression.

“Listen! Kaori will surely cure them. However, it’ll take time. There’s also the possibility of it being too late if we are too slow to treat them. So it is necessary to withdraw now and recover!

Besides, we lack three people now, so if you rush out, everyone won't be able to endure the next attack! We'll truly be annihilated!"

"Ugh, but…"

"In addition, isn't it about time your "Limit Break" reached dangerous time? In this situation, it'll be truly the end if Kouki is weakened! Please calm down! Everyone also feels the same as you!"

Hearing the logical words of his childhood friend, Kouki hesitated as he bit his lip when he noticed the bleeding at the edge of Shizuku's lips, and he felt his boiling head go cold. Shizuku was also mortified. Before she knew it, she had cut her lip. Her important comrades had been done in, and if possible she wanted to immediately beat up her enemy.

"Okay! Everyone, time to retreat! Shizuku, Ryuutarou! Please endure it for a little longer!"

"Leave it to me!"

"Right on!"

Kouki thrusted up the Holy Sword and began a long chant. Until now, he didn't use any long chant because it would not have defused their earlier situation. However, it was now the perfect

magic to clear a path for their retreat. But, it became necessary for him to entrust his defense to Shizuku and Ryuutarou because he was completely defenseless when he's chanting. In other words, they must face the demonic beasts aiming for Kouki. Naturally, even if Shizuku and Ryuutarou could not cope with it, they would still desperately fight back with considerable vigor even with injuries.

"Do you think I'll let you escape?" When she said this, the Demon race woman ordered the demonic beasts to block the passage behind Kouki's party. Then, she began to chant magic, with the chanting Kouki as her target.

However, that's when something abnormal began to happen to the Demon race woman.

"""""""ROOOOAR!!"""""""

"Kh!? Why!"

Somehow, five of the Chimeras that should be her allies were attacking the woman. While being surprised with widely opened eyes, she immediately resumed and used a shortened chant to activate her magic. High density of dust clouds became swirling blades with the woman in the center, cutting two of the attacking Chimeras. The attacks from the remaining Chimeras were somehow avoided by blowing herself away using the dust clouds.

The Demon race woman yelled, "Why am I being attacked!?" She was agitated while staring at the Chimeras that attacked her. Then,

she noticed something — all of the Chimeras had parts of their bodies destroyed. There's one that was headless, and one with a deep scar in its body which still had blood dripping from it even now.

"These…"

Just as the Demon race woman noticed, the five Chimeras that attacked her were the ones defeated by Kouki. The should-be-dead Chimeras stood up and attacked her. The situation was unreal until the Demon race woman recalled a certain magic and muttered, "Don't tell me…"

"I won't let you disturb Kouki-kun!"

As she shouted so, Eri swung her hand like a baton and made the corpses of the Chimeras surround the Demon race woman.

"Tch! Necromancer, huh! I didn't get such information!"

The Demon race woman had prior investigations before she waited in ambush for Kouki's party. From the information, there's no mention of someone capable using super difficult magic such as Necromancy, so this situation was completely unexpected. That was because, even though Eri had "Necromancer" as her class, she was bad at it and never use Necromancy in actual combat, but now this fact worked in their favor.

Even if I am bad at it, I'll just overcome it! Eri thought while she glared at the Demon race woman with a powerful gaze, and skillfully manipulated the Chimeras as though it wasn't her first time doing it in actual combat. However, she was just going to buy time rather than defeating the Demon race woman.

In the meantime, Kaori used "Focus" and "Ten Thousand Heavens" on Suzu. Among the party members, Suzu was the one in the direst situation, which was why she decided on focusing healing Suzu first. "Ten Thousand Heavens" was a mid-ranked healing magic of the light element capable of curing abnormal statuses. However, the petrification magic was a considerably strong magic, and she couldn't cured it all. Though the holes in her abdomen and arm were immediately recovered, she had lost a considerable amount of blood. She was in such a critical situation where needed immediate rest. It was also necessary to heal the hole in her leg the moment her petrification is undone.

Nomura, with a petrified left side of his body, had been diligently worked on to be released from his abnormal state by Tsuji Ayako. Tsuji Ayako had a high aptitude for healing magic, but the fact that Nomura had high resistance against earth magic, made his recovery rate considerably faster. His petrified leg had already been cured.

However, even with that, Tsuji Ayako could only grit her teeth when she sneaked a peek at Kaori swinging her white wand. Although their class was the same, "Healer," Kaori was obviously above her in terms of capability. Kaori was using magic to simultaneously heal Suzu who had far more serious injuries than Nomura. In addition, she sometimes used healing magic on Shizuku and Ryuutarou who were in battle to defend Kouki. It was a feat impossible to be mimicked by Ayako. She was mortified and felt miserable because she couldn't heal all of her allies while being in a dire situation.

Although Nomura seemed to want to say something to Ayako in regards to what she was feeling, he thought it was not the right time, so he bore the pain and muttered an incantation.

With their fighting force deceased and Kouki out of the fight, Hiyama and Nakano were covered in wounds as they confronted many demonic beasts. On the other side, Nagayama's party and Eri, who were protecting the two healers, noticed they had almost reached their limits. With the current flow, it would only be several minutes before they completely exhaust themselves.

Light gathered in Kouki's Holy Sword, but Nakano, who was about to cry at any moment, panicked when she thought of this as a suicidal action. The party members anxiously waited for the time… which finally came.

"Here I go! "Heavenly Downpour"!"

One flashing line fired from the thrusted up Holy Sword. The light exploded and scattered before the ceiling, pouring down towards the surrounding demonic beasts like meteors.

This "Heavenly Downpour" was an attack magic from light element where it flew above enemies, could pinpoint several enemies, and attacked them simultaneously. Its power wasn't that high since its power was distributed among the scattered lights, and was originally used to clean up a lot of small fries. But in "Limit Break" state, this bombing-like magic was enough to clean up demonic beasts in 50th floor.

However, the abnormally strong demonic beasts brought by the demon race woman didn't receive that much damage as expected, and at most, it only blew them away from his comrades as far as possible. But it was enough for Kouki. By creating a gap, his comrades would be able to retreat while the demon race woman was still occupied by the Chimera controlled by Eri.

Having confirmed so, Kouki demonstrated the characteristic of the magic which had a stupidly long chanting.

“”Converge”!”

As it pour down from the heaven, the rain of light that made the demonic beasts retreat temporarily, once again converged into the Holy Sword. The spectacle where the meteors converged as they left trails was quite a fantastic scene. Kouki thrusted the Holy Sword straight, and it shone as it cladded in light towards the demonic beasts that positioned themselves before the passage the retreat path of him and his comrades. With a war cry, he pulled the last trigger from the a series of magic.

“”Heavenly Claws Downpour”!”

Immediately, numerous meteors shot like a bombardment when his thrusted the Holy Sword forward. Even though it looked the same as previous attack, it had far stronger power since Kouki used his trump card, “Heaven Might,” and naturally it swept away the demonic beasts that closed their retreat path.

Normally, even if he wanted to use “Heaven Might,” the chant was long and he didn’t want Shizuku and Ryuutarou to protect him any longer than needed.

Even so, “Heavenly Claws Downpour” was the best technique he had in the current situation. The meteor-like torrent of lights went straight towards the demonic beasts blocking their retreat path, and caused numerous explosions simultaneously at the moment of impact. The bombardment that consisted of numerous light bullets exploded like the cluster bomb. The consecutive impacts resulted in the broken balance of the demonic beasts as they were being blown away.

“””ROOOOAR!!”””

The demonic beasts screamed as they closed their eyes. “Heavenly Claws Downpour” had an additional effect, blindness, caused by looking at the flash. The strong light generated in close proximity burnt their sights. Rubbing their eyes with their backhands, the demonic beasts blindly rampaged.

These demonic beasts were already out of Kouki’s party’s path of retreat. A way had opened straight to the passage.

“Now! Let’s retreat!”

With Kouki’s order, everyone simultaneously moved. Nagayama had carried the petrified Kondou and Saitou on his shoulders while Endou shouldered the fainted Suzu. Even though his left arm was still petrified, Nomura stood up by himself, endured the acute pain,

and began to run towards the passage.

“Tch! Don’t let them escape! Capture them!”

While fighting the last two Chimeras, the demon race woman ordered the unharmed demonic beasts. The demonic beasts moved as instructed and began their pursuit at once. Chimeras, four-eyed wolves, and black cats, they were all swift-footed demonic beasts, and the distance between them and Kouki’s party was shortened in less than no time.

It was at that time Nomura turned around. With pained face, he thrusted out his right hand and revealed a fearless smile.

“Don’t ever think I’ll be defeated in earth magic! It’s my payback! “Final Prison”!”

The same swirling grey orb just like the demon race woman’s magic shot out from Nomura’s hand. The magic orb transmitting petrification smoke collided with the incoming demonic beasts. When the demon race woman activated “Final Prison” a while ago, even without her saying anything, the demonic beasts immediately distanced themselves. That’s why Nomura the demonic beasts could sense the danger that lies within the spell, and chanted it in preparation to use on the pursuer as he was retreating.

What Nomura concluded turned out to be true. The moment the grey orb shot out, the charging demonic beasts immediately slammed on their brakes and began to jumped back to distance themselves and return to their previous location. At the same time,

the smoke became a smokescreen concealing the appearances of Kouki and his comrade as they were retreating.

In addition, Endou used magic to erase the remains of magic power and traces of their smells. Endou's class was an "Assassin," so he had natural talent in covert magic, and the demonic beasts were likely unable to pursue them.

The entrance of the previous room already looked smaller behind them, and maybe it was just their imagination, but mortified howls of demonic beasts seemed like it was resounding.

Kouki's party felt mortified because of their ragged bodies and their comrades who could not open their eyes. However, they also feel glad they survived, and continued to run away without saying anything.

Arifureta: Volume 8 Chapter 3

Chapter 73 of the Web Novel.

Even a Mob-character Has Things It Can Do

Their current location was the deepest room in the 89th floor.

Currently, there were four entrances within the huge octagonal room, but there was actually one more passage that leads to a hidden room between two entrances. The size of the entrance to this closed room was about 10 tatami, and its entrance was splendidly camouflaged.

Inside the room was Kouki's party, who were resting in complete relief. However, their expressions were uniformly gloomy. There were only those who cast their gaze down in deep frustration. Everyone was covered in wounds, so a lot of them had expressions distorted by pain.

Normally, Kouki would use his charisma to encourage everyone, but now, his whole body was attacked by severe exhaustion due to the recoil from "Limit Break," and he leaned his body in towards the wall, shutting his mouth in silent.

In addition, at such a time, the class moodmaker who could not read the mood in a good way had a pale face due to the loss blood, and was sleeping with rough breathing as she frowned in pain. This fact was also one of the reasons which made everyone depressed.

Suzu's lower half was still petrified from the knees down, and so Kaori was still continuing the treatment. Her pierced thigh had already been healed. What was left was to undo her petrification. However, Suzu had lost a large amount of blood from the attacks of the tentacles. There was the possibility that her vital blood vessels were damaged. But it could also be said that Kaori made it in time for the healing because she was Kaori.

To begin with, even Kaori was incapable of replenishing Suzu's lost blood. Thus, she was limited to making Suzu drink the blood-increasing medicine from this world. It was the reason why Suzu's physical condition would not return to normal immediately. It was necessary for her to rest.

Kaori had spent all of her time on Suzu, so the others didn't receive her healing. Naturally, Saitou and Kondou who were petrified into object-like things were kept as they were. After Suzu's treatment ended, next were the petrified two, and the other party members who understood there were still a long wait before it was their turn, didn't complain, except for a small portion of them. It was simply because they did not have energy to do it.

Inside the dim room where the gloomy atmosphere drifted about, Shizuku wrinkled her forehead and was puzzled on how to encourage the others. Naturally, the taciturn Shizuku could not skillfully change the atmosphere, unlike Suzu. However, there was no one else to do so since Kouki was also weakened due to the effect of "Limit Break" and his defeat, so she thought she must somehow do something. She was thinking in such manner because she naturally cared about others. A true worldly-wise person.

Shizuku herself was nearing her limit both physically and mentally, and she was gradually troubled by thinking of what to do. Thus, she decided to make an unable-to-read-the-mood-style gag with the resolution of dying a honorable death. However, when she considered again, she felt as though she felt herself breaking. Then, Nomura and Tsuji Ayako appeared from the improvised passage and they conversed.

“Fuu, I think it somehow turned into a good camouflation. But as expected, I am exhausted after using such a delicate magic… I’m already at my limit.”

“It’s not in your field of expertise to be able to transform it into wall without any sense of incompatibility… But you even used only one magic array to do that, so it can’t be helped. Cheers for your hard work.”

“You also worked hard to completely undo my petrification, right? Thanks.”

From the conversation of these two people, the one who made this room and camouflaged the entrance into the surrounding wall was the “Earth Magic-user,” Nomura Kentarou.

“Earth Magic-user” held high aptitude towards Earth-Element magic which directly manipulates the ground, but it could not do delicate work such as manufacturing and forming such as “Transmutation.” For example, it could create a bulge in the ground, make rocks fly up from the ground, harden the ground to create a stone spear, or controlling clouds of sand. In addition, for someone high-ranked, they could use petrification spells and create Golems (completely non-independent doll). However, an Earth

Magic user could not produce things by separating or mixing various minerals.

That's why, though it was possible to roughly create a hole on the wall using magic array at hand, to be able to "form" a wall similar to the surrounding walls, Nomura could do nothing but constructed it using only one magic array.

It should be noted that Tsuji Ayako had treated Nomura after he had undid his petrification.

"Thanks for your hard work, Nomura-kun. We should be able to gain some time with this."

"… I hope so. Well, with this I can do nothing but pray we won't be found until everyone has recovered. About Kousuke… we can only pray, too, huh."

"… Kousuke should be okay. He won't lose to anyone in term of the thinness of his shadow."

"No, Juugo. Don't say that, I feel bad just by hearing it…"

The talk about the increasing safety of their hiding place made the depressed atmosphere slightly relaxed, and Shizuku smiled as she treated Nomura kindly due to the cancellation of creating a black history of her.

On the other hand, Nomura had a bitter smile as he prayed and looked into the distance towards one of his bestfriends who was not here now.

That's right, currently one of their companions was not here. He was Endou Kousuke. With "Assassin" as his class, he was Nagayama Juugo and Nomura Kentarou's best friend. He was neither gloomy nor a poor talker, but his existence was a forgettable one. He was a normal high school boy who could speak casually with anyone, but somehow "his shadow is thin." His figure would be gone before anyone noticed it while saying, "Huh? Where is he?," as they looked at the surrounding only to be surprised that he was right beside them. He demonstrated elusiveness without any intention of doing it at all. And, of course, it was also the same story when they were still in Japan.

Though the person himself was extremely unwilling, his ability was currently the most useful. Endou alone separated from the party and went to explain the situation to Meld and the Knights. Normally, no matter how much of a cheat the summoned person was, it was suicidal to run through the level 80ish floors alone. Even Kouki's party had little room to spare in conquering the floors, only because there were 15 people cooperating.

But, if it was Endou, a man who could puff up his chest while saying, "The world's thinnest shadow!," he could take full advantages of his stealth skills and possibly be capable of reaching the 70th floor where Meld and the Knights were without being found by any demonic beast. Thinking so, Kouki's party sent Endou off.

When he left, Endou was slightly teary eyed… surely, he felt something by leaving alone to retreat from his companions. It could not be from his companions' persuasion words, such as: "If it's you with your thin shadow, even keen demonic beasts won't notice you! Only you have a thin shadow that won't lose to anyone, so you must be able to break through the demonic beasts without being noticed."

Truthfully, Kouki's party wanted to immediately withdraw from the upper floors. However, to their regrets, they didn't have any reserve strength left to do so. Within the party members who were covered in wounds, three of them were in no condition for battle while Kouki was in a weakened state, so they didn't think they would be able to break through the 80's floors.

Of course, they also didn't think Meld and the Knights would come to rescue them. Including Meld, only six people were capable of building their base on the 70th floor. In the party's minds, even by gaining help from other Knight members and the guild's high-ranked adventurers, whose strength came close to Meld, it should be within the safety margin for Meld and the others to reached the latter half of 70's floors, more than that was asking for the impossible.

Even with that, it would not have any meaning if Kouki's party didn't break through the 80ish floors by themselves. In other words, rather than to call for rescue, the purpose for Endo to go alone was to inform them about their situation and the Demon Race woman who lead the demonic beasts.

Kouki's party had certainly heard from Ishtal and the others from the Church of the Saints that the Demon Race was amassing demonic beasts, not by brainwashing, but enslavement, since the

beasts still carried their own wills. But, they never heard of such strong demonic beasts. And the astounding thing about the demonic beasts should be the “number” not their individual strength.

In fact, the demonic beasts the Demon Race woman lead had easily cleared the human untrodden 90th floor of «Orcus Great Dungeon» and overwhelmed Kouki’s party even with the cheats they carried. Such things made it strange if the human race was not destroyed sooner.

In other words, Ishtal’s information was not mistaken and the conclusion was still that the demonic beasts the Demon Race controlled “had became stronger.” Not only their “number” but also their individual strength was astounding. Kouki’s party judged this information should be conveyed by all means.

“Shirasaki-san. Please take care of Kondou-kun and Saito-kun’s de-petrification. It’ll take too much time if it is me. But, leave the healing of the others to me.”

“Un, okay. Don’t push yourself too hard, Tsuji-san.”

“I will be okay. Rather, that’s my line… sorry. If only I was stronger, Shirasaki-san’s responsibility would be decreased…”

On the side of the conversing with Nomura and the others, Ayako was drinking the potion for recovering magic power and she said to Kaori who was still continuing Suzu’s treatment. Though both were “healers,” Ayako’s abilities was far inferior compared to Kaori’s,

and even though she didn't show it, Ayako felt herself pathetic and full of apologies, since she could only add more responsibility to Kaori.

"There is no such thing," Kaori replied so with a wry smile, then Ayako turned to heal their companions. Even if it's slight, darkness disappeared from their companions' faces when they recovered by Ayako's healing. Nomura was watching Ayako with a face as though he wanted to say something, but he could not raise a voice since he felt he'd only disturbing her work.

"… In such a situation. Just speak if there's something you want to say."

"… Shut up."

Nagayama said to Nomura with an expression as if he finds something amusing, but Nomura turned his face away as if sulking.

After that, several tens of hours passed. Kouki's party's bodies and minds were gradually recovered and they took turns to sleep.

* * *

On the other side, one person, Endou Kousuke was retreating with the entrusted information about the Demon Race. He walked steadily aiming for 70th floor, where Meld and the Knights were, without entering even one battle.

In the 80th floors, if he was noticed by the demonic beasts, one on one would work out somehow but multiple on one was an out for him. That's why, while hurrying up as much as possible, he advanced with prudent thoughts. Thanks to that, he was able to pass right before demonic beasts unnoticed, even now.

After the demonic beasts were out his sight, Endou got off of the ceiling where he stuck himself. The figure which was completely clad in black to make the best use of "Invisibility," made him look just like an "Assassin." Surely, even the demonic beasts he had just passed by earlier would receive huge damage if they were to receive a surprise attack from the ceiling. In his mind, he didn't think, "… At least feel a little of my presence…" There was no glittering at the edge of his eyes when he saw the demonic beasts pass through without noticing him at all. Absolutely not.

"I must hurry…"

Endo understood the mission imposed on him. He had guessed Kouki and the others had sent him off to transmit the information which also meant he must survive. Nagayama and Nomura said, "Do not return here," but their wish was transmitted without the need for words.

However, after he fulfilled his duty, Endou was going to return to where Kouki and the others were. No matter what was said, he would not feel good if he was the only one who retreated to safety.

He felt somewhat empty because the demonic beasts didn't notice him, but it was the best weapon for the current Endou as he traced

the returning route memorized in his head, and finally he reached 70th floor.

While suppressing his impatience, he went towards the room with the teleport circle where Meld and the others set their base. After a while, Endo's Sign Perception perceived the presence of six people. There's no mistake they were Meld and the Knights. With this distance, the others should've noticed him since he had deactivated "Invisibility."

Endo turned at the last corner and arrived at teleportation room where Meld and the Knights were. However, even though his figure could completely be seen, Meld and the Knights didn't notice him at all. Endo then approached Meld with eyes of a dead fish, and called him.

"Commander! It's me! Please notice me! It's an emergency!"

"Uoh!? What!? Is it enemy's attack!?"

At the moment Endou raised his voice, Meld yelled, drew his sword, jumped back, and looked at the surrounding with vigilance. Even the other Knights were surprised and shaken for a moment, then they entered battle stance.

"Like I said, it's ME! Seriously, please don't give such reactions!"

"Eh? Wait, it's Kousuke, huh. Don't surprise me like that. Rather,

what happened to the others? Besides, aren't you somewhat ragged?"

"I said it before, there's an emergency!"

When Meld and the Knights understood it was Endou, they relaxed their shoulders because they knew how thin Endou's shadow was. However, Endou returned earlier than scheduled, and it was only him. Furthermore, Endou was ragged and covered in wounds, that's why their expressions became stern and guessed something must've happened.

As he was hurting because of the fact even the Kingdom's elite Knights were incapable of noticing him unless he called out to them. However, Endou thought it was not the time for that and he began to talk about the situation rapidly.

At first, Meld and the Knights put on dubious expressions, but their expression tightened as Endo advanced in his story. Then, maybe because his heart was shaken when his story reached to where he retreated alone, Endou was drown in tears and his head was patted.

"Don't cry, Kousuke. You are doing something only you can do. Do you think any of them can run through 20 floors in such a short time without even a fight? You've done well. I've certainly received your words."

"Commander… I, I'll return to them now. Even though they'd be able to return here by themselves… even if this time they said they

won't lose… Amanogawa was unable to defeat the enemies even with "Limit Break." All we could do was to run away. Everyone is considerably exhausted, so even if their injuries heal… if they are attacked… we still don't understand everything about those bastard demonic beasts… that's why, please return to the surface and convey this information."

So ashamed that he was crying, Endou rubbed his eyes with his sleeve, and said with a resolute expression.

Meld bit his lip in regret, and handed over the tool bag filled with all of the highest grade healing potions and everything else inside. The other Knights copied Meld's actions, and entrusted their tool bags to Endo, feeling mortified.

"I can only apologize, Kousuke. Although we want to rescue them together… we will just be a hindrance to you…"

"Ah, no, please don't worry about that. There's a considerable decrease in the number of our potions, so it will surely help us."

Saying that, Endou shook the tool bags where various potions were kept with a wry smile, but Meld's frown only deepened. It was not only because he was mortified with his incapability of helping them, but also due to the bitterness.

"… Kousuke. Now, I will say the worst thing I can say. I don't care if you scorn me because it's natural. However, I want you to hear it."

“Eh? What’s with this all of a sudden…”

“… No matter what happens, please take only “Kouki” back.”

“Eh?”

Meld’s words made Endou dumbfounded.

“Kousuke. If the demonic beasts are so strong and capable of putting the current you into such a predicament… the Human Race won’t have any future if we lose Kouki. Of course, I believe all of you can go through this and meet again with us, and I wish for that… However, I must say this as the Commander of Herrlicht Kingdom’s Knights. If by some chance it comes to that, please let “Kouki” live.”

“…”

Endou finally guessed what Meld meant and was dumbfounded. It was to sacrifice anyone to keep the more important one alive, a “choice” that must be done for someone with duty. It was something Endou never thought of. Therefore, Endou’s expression had become awfully bitter.

“… We, are we just extras added to Amanogawa?”

“Of course not. For it is true I wish and desire for everyone’s survival. No, such words don’t have any persuasiveness after I said that… Kousuke, at the very least I want you to convey those words to Shizuku and Ryuutarou.”

“…”

Meld’s words made Endou’s feelings darken. Meld, Endou, and the others had spent much time together. He was always by their sides ever since their beginner days in this world, and they had fought together for a long time. Meld was a big brother-like existence for the students who went to the front lines, and someone they trusted more than anyone in this world. That’s why, Endou felt betrayed by Meld who said to cast them away.

Still, he understood the necessity of what Meld said in the corner of his mind, so he could not curse him. With a dark expression, Endo only nodded and turned on his heels.

However, at that moment…

“Kousuke!?”

“Eh!?”

Meld suddenly pushed Kousuke aside and cliiiiing!!, the sound of metal grinding against metal rang out, it came from the drawn sword swung in an arc. Following that, he rotated once and sent a splendid kick towards the blurred space.

BooOOOm!

With such a sound, the blurred space was blown backward. Next, numerous claw marks appeared on the ground five meter from where they were. The claws were probably used to deaccelerate.

Seeing that, Endou, who fell on his butt, turned pale and muttered.

“I-Impossible. For them to catch up now…”

As though using those words as a signal, demonic beasts that had tracked Endo and the Knights, appeared one by one. Endou remained sitting on the ground, shaken to be caught this fast. Until he arrived here, he had used “Assassin” skills to erase his presence, smell, and magic trace while moving. The Demon Race woman was moving while searching for Kouki and the others, so it shouldn’t be possible to catch up with Endou who ran straight to the 70th floor.

Endou’s doubt was erased by the nightmare-like woman who appeared next.

“Tch. Only one, huh… I thought they had escape here where the teleport circle was… Looking at this, looks like they are hiding somewhere.”

Twirling her hair in irritation, the Demon Race woman who

appeared riding on a four-eyed wolf's back, made Meld and the Knights enter battle mode. From her words, the woman thought Kouki's party would run towards the teleportation circle, and that's why she came straight to this floor. With her guess off, she seemed to be irritated because she now needed to search around to look for Kouki and the others.

At the same time, it could be said Kouki and the others were still safe. Endou, Meld, and the Knights looked relieved, and smiled faintly. The demon race woman noticed them and snorted towards Endou and the Knights.

"Whatever, I also have a duty here… Let's quickly kill them and begin our search."

Immediately, all of the demonic beasts came attacking. The Chimeras charged and made the space blur, while the black cats covered the distance like a gale. The Brutal-look-alikes were approaching with maces in their hands, and the four-eyed wolves were looking for a chance from behind.

"Make a circle! Defend the teleport circle to the end! Kousuke! How long are you going to show that disgraceful attitude! Stand up and… run away! To the surface!"

"Eh!?"

As expected of the Kingdom's elites of the elites. Meld and the Knights promptly made such a formation and cooperated against the incoming demonic beasts. From hearing Endou's story about

the demonic beasts a little while ago, they clearly knew they were obviously inferior in terms of offense, that's why they chose to only defend and parry.

Endou slipped a surprised voice when Meld said, "Escape to the surface." If it's escaping, it would be better if all of us go together. When Meld said for him to get away from this place, Endou felt that rather than going to the surface, he had a responsibility to return to where Kouki and the others were.

"Stop daydreaming! Tell the surface about the Demon Race!

"B-But, Commander Meld and the Knights…"

"We are… going to made this place our graves! Kousuke! Destroy the teleport circle once you get to the other side! It'll at least buy you some time!"

"Th-That's…"

Meld's intention was clear. Even if they went to the surface, the demonic beasts would immediately teleport, too, if no one bought them even a little bit of time. If that happened, they'd lose the method to lose the pursuers, and they were likely to be killed when the pursuers catches up. Therefore, the best choice was for only one to escape while the rest buys him some time. If the time could be bought, the other teleportation circle on 30th floor could be destroyed, and he'd lose the pursuers. The teleportation circle was the type carved on the ground, so it could be restored using "transmutation." After one had escaped and told the stationed force

on the surface about this, they only have to restore the circle, and it could be used again by Kouki and the others.

The one chosen to escape was Endou, but because Meld previously said to cast away anyone other than Kouki, Endou was puzzled because this time he was told to escape at the expense of the Knights. It was the reason why he could not move immediately.

Toward such an Endou, Meld roared his deepest wish as the intense battle unfolded.

“I am sorry for being powerless! I am sorry I could not help you! I am sorry you weren’t the chosen one! Kousuke! This is the last wish of the worthless me! So please hear it!”

Toward the puzzled Endou, the big bro-like man’s last wish was conveyed.

“Don’t die!”

Those words made Endou understand everything. Meld, in reality, never wanted to let anyone die. If someone must be sacrificed to let the others survive, it would rather be the Knights. Meld and the Knights wished for not only Kouki, but all of the students to survive. For him to be “chosen” made Endou full of bitterness.

Endou bit his lip and used all of his might to turn on his heel towards the teleport circle. It was because he felt he would not be a

man if he didn't answer the wish and resolution of Meld here.

"Don't think you can!"

The Demon Race woman raised her hand towards a black cat while activating her own magic. The black cat shot out the tentacles on its back with a great velocity. In addition, stone spears also flew in the air riding on her killing intent.

Endou somehow managed to cut the tentacles with his shortsword, and bent his body to the side. It looked like he wouldn't be able to evade the following stone spears. The reason for the his incapability of evading was because of the positioning of the tentacles, and the wonderful timing of the spears that came in succession. Endou gritted his teeth and prepared to receive the impact. Even if he was to receive the attack, he was determined to keep running and jump into the teleport circle.

However, the expected impact didn't come. One of the Knight had jumped out of the formation and used his body to shield Endou.

"A-Alan-san!"

"Guh… don't worry, and go!"

With the stone spear piercing his abdomen, the Knight named Alan swung his sword to parry the attack of the incoming demonic beasts, and said to Endou with a truly manly smile. Endou strongly

bit his lip as though he was biting it off, and ran towards the teleport circle.

“Tch! What persistent small fries! Aim for that boy!” The Demon Race woman sent out new order in a little haste… but it was too late.

“Hah, this is our victory! Don’t you look down on Herrlicht Kingdom’s Knights!”

Meld revealed a fearless smile as he shouted. At the same time, Endou activated the teleportation circle and disappeared. The Demon Race woman ignored Meld’s words and thrust her hand towards the demonic beast. The demonic beast could directly manipulate magic power, so the teleportation circle could be activated without the need for troublesome chanting. Thus, she thought she could still make it in time, if she was quick enough.

However,

“I told you not to look down on us!”

Meld and the Knights had skillful techniques and teamwork Kouki’s party didn’t have. Using their experiences, they obstructed the incoming demonic beasts’ movements. They were outnumbered, but their defense skill and ability were praiseworthy.

To begin with, it was abnormal for Meld and the Knights to

confront these many powerful demonic beasts, no matter how much of a desperate effort they put forth. Alan, whose abdomen pierced by stone spear, was finally exhausted and the balance was destroyed when he fell on his knees, and could not persist against the demonic beasts anymore. With that opening, one of the Chimeras breached their defense line and reached the teleport circle.

The Chimera disappeared the same time the glow of the magic circle was lost.

“Kuh, one, passed, huh… Kousuke… don’t die.”

Meld’s mutters was erased by the demonic beasts’ roars. Unable to stomach that she let Endou escape, the Demon Race woman sent the demonic beasts simultaneously towards Meld and the Knights.

“Fuh, we have decided our grave would be here, so let’s rampage to the end. Guys, show them the spirit of Herrlicht Kingdom’s Knights.”

“”””””Ou!”””””

With Meld’s instruction, his subordinate Knights answered with a high-spirited shout. The spirit put into their shouts, even though it was just for a moment, made the surrounding demonic beasts flinch.

… Ten minutes passed

Silence once again returned to the room with teleportation circle on the 70th floor.

* * *

“Uwaaaaa—!!”

With a shout mixed in between scream and war cry, Endou jumped out from the teleportation circle in «Orcus Great Dungeon»’s 30th floor, immediately wielded his shortsword, and tried to destroy the magic circle before him.

“Wh-What!? Eh, you! What are you doing!?”

“Stop him.”

“Catch him.”

A black-clothed boy appeared from the teleportation circle, suddenly raised a shout and began to destroy the magic circle with the sword in his hand. This made the surrounding people, dressed as Knights, stand in blank surprise for a moment then they raised angry roars and jumped at Endou to obstruct his destructive action.

These guys were Meld's subordinates who was responsible of protecting the teleportation circle on the 30th floor. Because of the force deficiency, there were people who were at their limit just by guarding the 30th floor. Unable to destroy the magic circle with a blow, Endou struck for the second time, for the third time, and when he only need one more swing to destroy the circle, he was barely stopped from destroying the magic circle.

"L-Let go! If it's not destroyed, quickly! Those bastards will-! Let go!"

"Wh-, aren't you from the Hero's party!? Why are you…"

After seeing him closely, the Knights knew the person acting like a madman was one of the hero's companions, and the Knights spontaneously loosened their holds as they whispered voices of surprise. With that chance, Endou once again swung his shortsword and destroyed a part of the magic circle, but he was one step too slow.

The magic circle once again glowed and activated. Thus, in the next moment, a blurred space attacked Endou and the Knights.

"Damn it!"

"What's—! Guuaaa!!"

Endou immediately jumped back and was barely able to evade the

Chimera's attack. However, the Knights who didn't know the situation and should have been able to evade, defenselessly received the Chimera's claw attack, and died with deeply torn armor.

One of their comrades who suddenly sprayed blood, made the other Knights panic. Endou frantically shouted towards the Knights with a voice filled with impatience.

"It's an enemy! Be careful of the blurring space! More will come if we don't destroy the magic circle!"

Endou's scream-like voice made the Knights regain their senses. However, at the same time, one more person was slashed and blown away. There were seven people guarding the teleportation circle on the 30th floor. And now two had been killed.

Endou grit his teeth towards the fact and used an "Assassin" skill called "Wallrun," to run on the ceiling and aimed to destroy the magic circle from above. However, the Chimera noticed him and tried to intercept him by jumping.

Although they still didn't understand what had happened, the Knights guessed it was necessary and jumped towards the Chimera that was trying to attack Endou. However, the Knights could only see the Chimera as a blurred space, so naturally they didn't understand what kind of attack it had; they understood nothing about it. That's why, the Knight who jumped behind the Chimera had his neck bitten by the tail-snake, while the Knights right beside its flank was beaten by its wings and thrown to the ground.

Nevertheless, it was not meaningless. The Chimera somewhat lost its balance and Endou was able to evade its dangerous claws and fangs. It was not a complete evasion since his shoulder and flank were gouged, but the snake tail was slashed, and the Chimera fell into the ground when they passed each other.

The Chimera flapped its wings to regain its balance to land on the ground slightly away from them, while Endou immediately stood up after he fell on his shoulder and simultaneously swung his short sword in his hand towards the previously damaged teleportation circle.

At the same time it landed, the Chimera turned around and once again rushed to kill Endou. However, at that time, Endou's shortsword was already pierced the magic circle with all of his might. BAM!, a clear sound effect rang out. It was the evidence the magic circle had been destroyed. The trace of magic when the teleportation magic circle was used had disappeared.

"With this—… kh… gaa, AaAAAAAH!!!"

Succeeded in destroying the teleportation circle, Endou inadvertently leaked a relieved sigh because no more pursuers would come. However, the Chimera's fangs bored into his right arm in the next moment, and he screamed due to the sharp pain. The strong jaws tried to bite off Endou's right arm.

The Knights charged towards it and used all of their might to attack the Chimera in order to disturb it. The Chimera whose side were pierced by strengthened short spears, inadvertently loosened the force on its jaws. Endou pulled out his right arm, slipped out the concealed knife from his left sleeve, and slashed the Chimera's

eye.

The rampaging Chimera slashed two more Knights to death when they approached it to give it the finishing blows. Endou threw the knife in his hand, but the Chimera, with a slashed eye, evaded by instinct.

Immediately, one of the Knights suddenly raised a scream. He inadvertently looked towards the source and saw the Knight who previously had his neck bitten by the snake, was beaten to the ground. The Knight's lips turned purple, writhed in pain, and died in no time.

"Damn it!"

Seeing that, the last Knight ran out to kill the snake, but it was a fatal mistake. The Chimera whose back was turned to the Knight noticed the incoming enemy and immediately attacked. Covered in wounds, Endou squeezed out all of his remaining strength, and activated his certain kill attack towards the neck of Chimera that attacked the Knight.

"DieeEEEEE!!"

Being separated from his companions, forced to desert Meld and the Knights, for the Knights he knew to be killed, and various grudges mixed into his shout, he struck a fatal blow demonstrating all of his power. He tore the Chimera's neck from the nape, and it died in a moment.

Due to the inertia, Endou who sprang from the Chimera's flank, crossed it, and rolled tremendously once he reached the ground. Enduring the pain in his shoulder, right arm, and flank, Endou lifted his upper body with his left arm to confirm, and burn the Chimera's death into his eyes.

The Chimera laid quietly looking to be completely dead due to the partly torn up neck. However, Endou's expression was weak as though he was going to cry rather than feeling joy, and he couldn't help but whisper, "Damn it!"

Before his gaze was the figure of the last Knight who rushed out. He was falling prone. With sword gripped in his right hand, his face had turned purple. Beside him, was the torn up snake. Perhaps, right before the Chimera attacked, he slashed the snake that sprung to him and his face might be bathed by the toxin inside its body. Resultantly, all of the Knights who were guarding 30th floor had been annihilated.

Because he could not save even one person, Endou cried as he shouted, "Damn it!," many times. He shouted the same words for a while, and Endou, who thought he had died due to blood loss, took out the highest grade ointments and recovery potions from the tool bags he got from Meld and the Knights. After his wounds were treated by the emergency set, he silently lined the Knights' corpses in a corner of the room where the teleportation circle was.

For a little while, Endou watched the Knights' figures, and slowly turned around to advanced a step toward the surface. His face was as pale as a ghost, and his eyes were hollow without any ambition. Thinking "Once again only I survived," Endou's heart was

tightened by a heavy, cold chain. The current him moved his body just like a machine that only had to fulfill the role he was entrusted with, and he single-mindedly aimed towards the surface.

Arifureta: Volume 8 Chapter 4

Chapter 74 of the Web Novel.

The Nostalgic Holad

“Hyahha—! Yeah!” As if such a sound could be heard, a dense, enormous, and fierce pressure mercilessly attacked the Adventurers aiming at Hajime’s party. The bloodlust that was previously coming from the Adventurers seemed nothing but a childish tantrum compared to this. As if also carrying physical force, the immature Adventurers immediately lost their consciousness while all of the standing Adventurers were re-seated without even having the time to tremble.

With Raisen Grand Canyon to their left, and a magnificent meadow to their right, the magic driven two and four-wheelers advanced towards the west with the sun at their backs. Raising a cloud of dust on the highway as it advanced by the four-wheeler’s side, the two-wheeler went back and forth between the barren ground and the meadow by the canyon side as it roared noisily, merrily even.

“… Seems like Shia is in a good mood. She even shouted just like those guys from the end of the century.”

“… Hmm. I also want to try it.”

In the four-wheeler’s driver seat, Hajime muttered with an amazed expression with one hand steering the vehicle, while the elbow of

his other hand was on the window frame. Just as Hajime said, Shia was not riding on the four-wheeler. She was driving the two-wheeler alone.

To begin with, Shia truly liked the feeling of cutting through the wind as the two-wheeler advanced, but the number of people had increased recently and their main transportation method changed to that of the four-wheeler, which made her dissatisfied. Though she could feel the wind if she put her head out the window, she could not be satisfied with that and she could not stick to Hajime like when they used the two-wheeler because the seat next to him was reserved for Yue. Thus, she asked Hajime to teach her how to drive the two-wheeler.

The magic-driven two-wheeler could be operated easily as long as one could use direct magic power manipulation. Depending on the circumstances, direct magic power manipulation could also be used to control the steering without the need to grip it. Thus, this was not that difficult for Shia, and she quickly learned how to drive it. Following that, she became enamoured with the two-wheeler.

Even now, she moved left and right while squeaking, she even drifted and popped a wheelie. Furthermore, she also did jackknife and backride techniques which would not lose to a professional extreme motorcycle stunt artist. The acceleration and braking could be done by manipulating her magic power, so it was far easier to operate than the one on Earth… Still, she kept up with Hajime's pace. Shia's rabbit ears even said, "Hey, hey, what do you think about my technique?" as they sometimes turned towards Hajime with a somewhat cheeky expression, which was simply irritating.

Occasionally, there were those whose character would change

when they drive, and Shia might be one of them. Seeing Shia, Yue by Hajime's side also wanted to try driving it herself. Yue even said, "Hyahha—!" but Hajime decided to absolutely stop her as he felt the mood would become awful. Also, beside Hajime was the three or four year-old Myuu putting her head out of the window at Yue's side, as she steadily climbed from Yue's lap with sparkling eyes. Pointing her hand towards Shia, who began to stand while steering with one hand, Myuu began pleading to Hajime.

"Papa! Papa! Myuu also wants to do that!"

"I already said you can't."

Sitting on Yue's lap, Myuu, whose wish was denied began to whine and said, "No! Myuu wants to!" to Hajime. So as to not let the whining Myuu fall from the seat, Yue hugged her from behind and scolded her with, "…don't whine!" "Uu~" Myuu raised a cute groan and Hajime showed a face as though to say it couldn't be helped towards the depressed Myuu.

"Myuu. I'll drive it with you later, so be patient."

"Ehh~? Really?"

"Mhm. I won't permit you to board it with Shia… but it's okay if it is with me."

"So, Myuu can't drive it with Shia-oneechan?"

“Mhm, absolutely. Just look at her. This time she’s making a strange pose while steering. Though something come to my mind… I absolutely won’t let you get on the vehicle with someone who drives dangerously.”

Standing above the steer, Shia raised an American-like laughter while making a strange pose where her right hand’s fingers spreaded and hid her face while her left arm hung down with the shoulder slightly raised. As he stared at Shia who made Joke-like pose, Hajime pointed at Myuu. ‘Don’t copy Shia, okay?’, he said.

“To begin with, I don’t want you to get on the two-wheeler because it’ll be dangerous… should I make a child seat? The materials will be… mumble, mumble.”

“Yue-oneechan. Papa is mumbling. How strange.”

“… Hajime papa is just worried about Myuu… unexpectedly overprotective.”

“Fufu, does it mean Master is an unexpectedly indulgent person? Hmm, this gap somehow… haa, haa.”

“Yue-oneechan. Tio-oneechan is panting.”

“… It is an incurable disease so just ignore her.”

Serving as Myuu's conversation partner, Yue patted Myuu's head, who was gazing up at her.

Only a little time had passed since they started traveling with Myuu, but Hajime had already given up about Myuu calling him, "Papa." At first, he used every possible means to change the way she called him, but Myuu began to tear up every time, and her trembling eyes silently appealed, "Is it bad? Does Papa hate Myuu?" Even Hajime, who was capable of beating the demonic beasts in the abyss to a pulp could not win against Myuu, just like how he could not go against Yue. Resultantly, he could not change it and it was established that he would be called "Papa."

As he allowed (he gave up) her to call him "Papa," Hajime began to worry about Myuu. Even now, it could be said he was being overprotective. Shia is a shameless rabbit while Tio is a pervert, so I must protect Myuu until she returns to her mother! or so he thought. During the time when he begins to be too meddlesome, Yue was the one who became the stopper, as well as the one in charge of teaching Myuu about common sense, and that's the current composition of Hajime's party.

Because Myuu was glued to Hajime, Yue couldn't flirt with him, and she became somewhat dissatisfied, but she felt it could not be helped since she had also come to adore the cute Myuu.

While silently firing her magic towards Tio, who was panting and concentrating on her delusion in the back seat to silence her, Yue was covering Myuu's ears since it would be bad for her education. Thus, with Hajime who was still mumbling about making the seat for Myuu, and Shia on the two-wheeler with only the rear wheel

touching the ground, I must keep calm! Yue made an empty resolve.

* * *

Hajime's party were currently at the Post Town, Holad.

Normally they would just pass through here, but because of a request from the head of Fhuren branch Adventurer Guild, Ilwa, they must stop on their way here. Even so, it didn't take too much time as they passed here along their way to «Guryuu-en Great Desert».

Hajime walked towards Holad branch guild along the main street with nostalgic gaze. Riding on Hajime's shoulders, Myuu noticed his state and used her small hand to tap on Hajime in curiosity.

"Papa? Did something happened?"

"Nn? Ah～, well, I've come here before… though it's only been four months, it feels like years to me…"

"… Hajime, are you okay?"

Yue, whose hands were affixed on Hajime's arm, had a complex expression while looking at him anxiously. Hajime shrugged and his atmosphere returned to the usual in the next moment.

“Ah, there’s no problem. It’s just that, I was absorbed in my emotions because it’s been such a long time. I remember that everything started here… After a night spent in tension, fear, and even desperation, I went to the dungeon on the next day… and then I fell.”

“…”

Hajime felt that in a way, that day could be called a fateful day. His monologue made Yue and the girls listen to him in a serious mood. Yue was silently looking at Hajime. And Tio asked Hajime questions out of curiosity.

“Hmm. Dost Master want to return to that day? After all, there’s the case of Master’s companions, too, right? Though Master hast his own circumstances… After all, thither’s not only those whom hast hurteth master, right? Was thither not someone master got along with?”

Because Tio’s relationship with Hajime’s party was still shallow, she would sometimes frankly ask about things she should be careful about even though she knew what was going through Hajime’s mind. It was because she didn’t want to only become a travel companion, so Tio put forth great effort to truly become a comrade in Hajime’s party. Although she was a pervert, in a way she favored Hajime.

That’s why Hajime listened to Tio’s question without being bothered by it. Thus, he exhaled and recalled the midnight tea party under the moonlight. With the unpalatable tea, there was the

white negligee and black hair which reflected the moonlight, whose owner swore to protect him, and at the last moment, she stretched her hand out towards him with a bitter expression as her companions pinioned her…

Unexpectedly, he felt a trembling hand on his arm which made him regain his senses. When he looked at the source, Yue was looking straight at him with strong, resolute gaze, and her trembling hand tightly grasped Hajime's sleeve.

Hajime matched Yue's gaze and returned to silently gazing at her with a soft and gentle gaze.

"Certainly, there was someone… However, even if I could return to those days, I will still tread on this path of mine."

"Heh~, why?"

Although she knew the answer from Hajime's expression, Tio still asked with a slightly amused expression. Without averting his gaze from Yue, Hajime used his other hand to gently grasp Yue's hand which was grasping his sleeve. Yue had a faintly smiling expression, and her cheeks were slightly dyed in red.

"Of course… it's because I want to meet Yue."

"… Hajime."

In the town of Holad, «Orcus Great Dungeon» made it possible to raise level quickly while selling the magic stones within the safety margin. Thus, Adventurers, Mercenaries, and Kingdom Soldiers gathered, together with a lot of merchants as their partner in business. The town displayed serious hustle and bustle. Naturally, the main street of such a town would have increased bustle.

Within the main street where a lot of people were doing their activities, Hajime and Yue suddenly halted and were looking at each other. They created their own world without minding their surroundings. They reached out to each other's cheeks, and their atmosphere looked like they were about to kiss at any moment. Though they had somewhat gathered a crowd around them, and they were showered by gazes filled with curiosity and jealousy, Hajime and Yue didn't notice them at all. They could only see each other.

"Tio-san, did you hear that? It isn't "you" that Hajime-san wants to meet, is it? It's only Yue-san. Once again, they created their own world. They don't even care about their location and situation. And we can only watch them from the side, can't we?

I feel it is about the time that such an atmosphere should be created between me and Hajime-san. Even though I'm always prepared to receive such treatment, it always passed me by, and to be treated as a regrettable character… No, I understand, you know? I know Yue-san is special. I yearn for a relationship just like those two, that's why I want to stay together with them.

What I mean is, it's natural Yue-san is special and I feel it's a good thing. Rather, Hajime-san who neglects Yue-san is not Hajime-san.

If that happens and Yue-san becomes sad because of it, I'll be the one who beat Hajime-san to a pulp.

However, it is a however, kay? Recently, Hajime-san has become slightly dere~ I wonder if it's about time I climb the stairs to adulthood~ I expected that, but it didn't come true. No matter how special Yue-san is, wouldn't it okay for Hajime-san to look at me a little more? It is shameful for a man to refuse a woman's offer.

Even though it was easily understood that I welcomed him, he sloppily answered with a composed face to ignore it, this dimwit!, I thought so, but I never thought of complaining. I just want to flirt! Then, doing this and that on the bed! Even the hardcore play he did with Yue-san! I thought of those! So, what does Tio-san, the representative of all perverts, think!?"

"Sh-Shia. This one knows thou hast saved up thy resentment, but calm down. Rather, the one who shouted while not paying attention to the location is art thou. Also, to casually speak ill of this one in the end… To be treated as a pervert in such a public place, haa, haa, made everyone look at this one with cold gazes… Haa, haa, ngh, ngh."

In the middle of the main street, the rabbit-eared girl shouted she wanted to do erotic things while speaking ill of the perverted beautiful woman whom began panting due to the atmosphere. The people who had gathered due to their curiosity were taken aback and they backed away.

"Papa~, Shia-oneechan and Tio-oneechan are…"

“Myuu. Don’t look at them. Just act as if we don’t know them.”

“…Shia… next time, I will tie Hajime and together with Shia…”

Shia’s shout was noticed by Hajime and Yue, and they returned to their senses. However, for now, they acted as though they didn’t know either Shia or Tio, and not looked at them because Myuu had become dumbfounded.

Although Yue whispered something frightening, Hajime decided he didn’t hear anything. But if he was worried about it, he would think of the possibility of the trap the next time he is with Yue. But he wanted to be pardoned from doing that. If it is Yue, such a thing… would not… happen, right? Surely, probably… it’ll be safe even though there’s a previous offense! Hajime tried to persuade himself.

Because from the distance, What’s with this commotion!, the town guards could be seen everywhere, Hajime reluctantly dragged Shia and Tio by the scruff of their necks to get out of this place. Every time they went to the town, gazes filled with envy and jealousy pierced Hajime who was surrounded by beautiful girls and beautiful woman… However, he didn’t know why only this time he felt there were a lot of sympathetic gazes. Surely it’s only his imagination.

* * *

Ignoring the gazes of the people, Hajime’s party finally arrived at Holad branch Adventurer Guild. With Myuu on his shoulders just

like before, Hajime opened the guild's door. Unlike the one in the other towns, the Holad branch's door was made of metal. The heavy sound became a signal that someone was entering the building.

It was the first time he came here, since the last time he was in town, he neither had business here nor did he had the time to go to the adventurer guild. The atmosphere inside Holad branch was just like an adventurer guild Hajime had expected from the beginning.

There were broken parts of the walls and floor which were roughly patched up. Mud and stains from something were here and there, giving an insanitary impression. The interior was just like the other branches where the counter was near the entrance with a restaurant on the left. However, unlike the other branches, alcohol was served here, and there were old men hanging around to drink during the daytime. There was also the second floor where Adventurer-like people were looking down by the handrails. The people in the second floor gave off the atmosphere of a strong group. He didn't know if it was an unspoken rule, but high-ranked Adventurers seemed to be on the second floor.

The atmosphere around the Adventurers was also different from the other towns. Everyone was glaring at them, and there was none of the heartwarming atmosphere compared to the one in Brook town. It could be said to be natural, because the Adventurers and Mercenaries were filled with spirit since these experts in battle and fighting demonic beasts would voluntarily enter the dungeon.

However, there was a tense atmosphere inside the guild and something seemed unusual. Something had obviously occurred since the Adventurers had serious expressions.

At the moment Hajime's party entered the guild, the Adventurers turned their gazes towards them simultaneously. Their gazes were so sharp, that it felt like it would be able to penetrate through them which made Myuu, who was still riding on Hajime's shoulders, to shout, "Eeek!," and she quickly clung to Hajime's head. Because Hajime appeared with a little girl on his shoulders while being surrounded by pretty girls and a beautiful woman, the Adventurers began to let out their bloodlust which contained various meaning. Myuu trembled even more. She was put down from Hajime's shoulders, and was now held with his right hand. Myuu buried her head on Hajime's chest to completely shut herself out of the surroundings.

With a youthful vigor, rather the Adventurers were just intoxicated by their own vigor, some of them began to stand from their seats. "Let's beat up this brat," was what their gazes implied, with an outburst of anger to release their resentment came from guild wrapped in bizarre atmosphere, and it was obvious they disliked Hajime's party.

There was a possibility Hajime's party were clients… but these Adventurers seemed to have never thought of that. The talk would be after they beat him up or something like that, and those who thought so, stepped forward towards Hajime.

However, Hajime, who recently became Papa, was an overprotective one. Even though it was temporary, he could not remain silent if someone frightened his daughter. Veins had already popped up on Hajime's forehead and, contrary to his hand which was gently calming Myuu, his gaze was fierce.

Thus…

BaaaANG!!

As if that sound could be heard, a dense, enormous, and fierce pressure mercilessly attacked the Adventurers aiming at Hajime's party. The bloodlust that previously came from the Adventurers was a childish tantrum compared to this. As if carrying physical force, too, the immature Adventurers immediately lost their consciousness while all of the standing Adventurers were re-seated without being given the time to tremble.

Even those who didn't lose their consciousness from Hajime's pressure, "Pressure" and "Magic Power Emission," were desperately supporting their body and consciousness while most were trembling with pale faces, and with cold sweat.

After a moment that felt like an eternity, the pressure weakened. The Adventurers used that chance to frantically take a breath. Though there were those who accidentally pissed and vomited on themselves… Hajime was smirking to them while he spoke.

"Oi, to those aiming at us."

"""""""""""" !""""""""""""

The Adventurers were surprised and shaken by Hajime's voice. The gazes that timidly looked at Hajime had fear stuck in them as if

they were looking at a monster. However, without caring about such a thing, Hajime demanded… ordered them.

“Laugh.”

“”””””””””Eh?”””””””””

The Adventurers were puzzled due to the situation, ignoring order. So, Hajime continued his words.

“Did you not hear me? I said, laugh. Smile. Appeal to her that there’s nothing to be afraid of. Waves your hands, too. This child is frightened because of you. What will you do if she gets traumatized by it? Ah? Ah? So, amend for it.”

Then, don’t bring such a young child here!, was what the Adventurers wanted to retort, but they could not since the other party was a monster. Because Hajime’s sharp gaze pierced the puzzled them, they frantically tried to force a smile even though their cheeks were extremely stiff. Along with that, they began to wave their hands, too.

The appearance of the the fierce looking men with good body builds floating smile with cramped cheeks while lightly waving their hands, was truly surreal. However, without worrying about such things, Hajime nodded and whispered to Myuu whose face was buried in Hajime’s chest.

Because of what he said, Myuu timidly raised her face, and her moistened eyes looked up to Hajime. Next, she slowly turned around while being urged by Hajime's gaze. Naturally, there were the fierce and trained people desperately trying to look friendly.

"Eeek!"

As expected, Myuu was still frightened and returned to Hajime's chest. Hajime frowned. With more piercing glare at the Adventurers that said, "Bastard, what's with this!" "Don't be unreasonable!," was what the Adventurers rebutted in their minds, and they finally turned their gazes towards Yue and the others by Hajime's side to plead for help.

Receiving their gazes, "Haa~," Yue sighed deeply, approached Myuu, and whispered something to her ear similar to what Hajime had done earlier. Thus, Myuu once again timidly raised her face and looked at the Adventurers. The Adventurers panickedly tried to look friendly.

For a while, Myuu silently watched the Adventurers and, as if she understood something, she smiled and waved her small hand back. Because her smile and gesture were so lovely, the trained men inadvertently calmed down while forgetting the situation. Hajime was also satisfied, and once again carried Myuu on his shoulders. Then, he walked towards the counter as though he didn't have any more interest in the Adventurers.

The moment Hajime's party arrived before the counter, ignoring the crumbling sounds that rang out here and there, they told their purpose to the receptionist.

By the way, the receptionist, a girl, was a lovely one. A cheerful girl who was at least as old as Hajime. It seemed the usual template was here. But most noticeable was the tension and big confusion that appeared on the attractive receptionist's expression.

"Is the branch head here? I have a letter from Fhuren branch head… but he said to personally hand it over."

As he said so, Hajime presented his status plate to the receptionist. Although she seemed to be filled with tension, the receptionist sat up and received the status plate just like a pro.

"Th-Thank you. You can entrust it to me. E-excuse me, just what kind of request did the Fhuren's… branch head had?"

Normally, no mere adventurer would receive any request from a branch head, so the receptionist displayed a slightly dubious expression. However, her eyes opened wide when she saw the information displayed by Hajime's status plate.

"G-"Gold" rank!?"

Among Adventurers, not even 10% of them were "Gold" ranked. Thus, all of the guild personnel were told about the "Gold" rank ones so they would be able to recognize them. Naturally, this receptionist also knew of all the "Gold" ranked Adventurers. However, she unintentionally leaked a surprised voice because she didn't know about Hajime.

Her voice made the Adventurers, guild staff members, and everyone inside the guild building opened their eyes wide in surprise. And just like the receptionist, they stared at Hajime. The building interior became noisy.

The receptionist turned pale as she realized she just exposed an individual's information loudly. Thus, she began to bow at tremendous pace.

"I-I am sorry! I truly am sorry about it!"

"Ah~, no need for that. It's not like I mind it. So, can you convey this to the branch head now?"

"Y-Yes! Please wait for a moment!"

The receptionist who seemed as though she would continue to apologize if he didn't say anything made Hajime smile wryly. After the small battle in UI and the great rampage that annihilated an underground organization in Fhuren, he thought it'd already be too late to try to hide his identity.

The "Gold" ranked adventurer boy who brought along a child and a harem of pretty girls as well as a beautiful woman made him gather attention inside the guild building. Nevertheless, Hajime's party gave off a clear attitude that it was the usual as they waited for the receptionist. Unaccustomed to being in the center of attention, Myuu felt uncomfortable, only to be comforted by

everyone in Hajime's party. Because the way Tio comforted her was bad for Myuu's education, a slap visited her cheek. Thus, it raised further commotion, but was ignored as expected.

Before long, rather not even five minutes had passed, someone ran from inside the interior with loud footsteps. Hajime's party paid attention to the sound and wondered what happened. A boy clad in black jumped out from the passage behind the counter and skidded on the floor due to the momentum. As though he was looking for someone, the boy began to look around.

Hajime remembered the person. He was dumbfounded since he never thought he would meet him again in such a place, and thus he muttered inadvertently.

"… Endou?"

Arifureta: Volume 8 Chapter 5

Chapter 75 of the Web Novel.

To Accomplish One's Obligation

"… Endou?"

Hajime's mutter made the black-clothed boy, Endou Kousuke, respond with "!," a response similar to a certain cardboard-loving mercenary when an enemy appeared in a game. He kept looking around and began to shout as if he was irritated, because he could not find the one he was looking for.

"Nagumoo! Are you here!? Is it really you!? Where are you!? Nagumoo! Come out if you're alive! Nagumo Hajimee—!"

Because his shout was too loud, one by one people began to shut their ears with their fingers. His voice was filled with desperation since he wanted to ascertain whether the should be dead classmate of his had survived.

Yue and the girls turned their gazes towards Hajime. With an expression as if he didn't want to be involved in this, Hajime scratched his cheek and spoke towards Endou who repeatedly shouted his name out loud.

"Ah~, Endou? I can hear you just fine so stop repeatedly shouting

my name.”

“!? Nagumo! Where are you!?”

Endou turned his face towards Hajime, reacting to Hajime’s voice. Hajime was inadvertently taken aback because Endou looked so desperate.

For a moment, Endou’s gaze met Hajime’s, but he immediately averted his gaze and began to look around again.

“Damn it! I can’t see him even though I can hear his voice! Is he a ghost now? As expected, he returned as a ghost!? So that’s why I cannot see him!?”

“No, I am right in front of you, you big idiot. Rather, calm down already. You whose thinness shadow ranked the best in the whole world.”

“!? Again, his voice!? Wait, whose shadow did you say was so thin that even the convenience store’s automatic door didn’t react to it and disappears from time to time! The automatic door opened at least one of three tries!”

“So, it didn’t open two times in three tries… as expected of you.”

After conversing that much, Endou finally noticed the source was

the white-haired, eye-patched boy before him and he began to carefully observe Hajime's face. Towards Hajime, who averted his face since he felt unpleasant due to not having a hobby where he'd be pleased from being watched by a man, Endou spoke as if he could not believe what he perceived.

"Y-You… are you… Nagumo?"

"Haa… yeah, that's right. Though I look like this now, I am Nagumo Hajime."

As he carefully observed Hajime from head to toe, Endou became dubious because Hajime was quite different from the one in his memory, but he finally believed Hajime after looking at his features and how he knew about the thinness of his shadow.

"So… you are alive."

"Of course, after all I am right before you now."

"Somehow, no you have completely changed… Your looks, atmosphere, and tone…"

"I crawled up from that abyss with my own power, you know? So, of course, I've changed."

"I-Is that so? No, but, I see… You really are alive…"

Although Endou was perplexed by Hajime's blunt attitude, his gaze softened as he was relieved that the classmate he thought to be dead was alive. No matter how he envied him like the other boys because Kaori paid attention to Hajime, and how he pretended to not see Hiyama's gang bullying Hajime, nothing was more frightening than thinking Hajime had died. Hajime's death had such a great impact. That's why Endou was purely glad his classmate was alive.

"Rather… when did you become an Adventurer? Moreover, a "Gold"…"

"Nn~, well it just happened."

After Hajime replied, Endou's expression completely changed. The relieved expression he had because his classmate was alive, had changed into an expression as if he was in a pinch. Hajime looked at Endou again and he noticed Endou was in ragtag state. He tilted his head, wondering what had happened.

"… In other words, you came back alive from the depths of the dungeon by yourself, and became strong enough to gain the Adventurers' highest rank? That's rather unbelievable…"

"Well, that's true though."

After Hajime confirmed what Endou said with a serious expression as the truth, Endou sprang up towards Hajime and gripped his

shoulders, and in a voice filled with more desperation than before, he began to speak in sorrow.

“Then, please! Please enter the dungeon with me! We must hurry or else everyone will be dead! We need someone with battle potential even if it is just one person! There’s also the possibility that Kentarou and Kondou have died! That’s why please help us, Nagumo!”

“W-Wait a sec. What’s with you all of a sudden!? I don’t know the situation, you know? So what’s with the dead thing? And can’t Amanogawa somehow do something about it? There’s also Commander Meld, so there’s no need to worry about another failure like when we faced the Behemoth…”

Hajime perplexedly asked back because even though he usually didn’t stand, out Endou wore an expression as if he was truly at his wits’ end. And at the moment Endou heard Commander Meld name, he fell to his knees with a truly dark expression. Next, he muttered with a low, subdued voice.

“… –ad.”

“Hah? I can’t hear you. So, what did you say?”

“… I said they are dead! Commander Meld, Alan-san, and the other Knights are dead! All of the Knights who entered the dungeon are dead! They died to let me escape! Because of me! They are dead! They died!”

“… I see.”

“They died,” Endou said repeatedly like a child throwing a tantrum, and Hajime only replied with two words.

Hajime’s class was not a fighting one, so he didn’t have much encounter with Commander Meld. However, he remembered that Commander Meld was a good person, and he recalled that Commander Meld believed the “incompetent” him before Hajime fell into the abyss. If it was Hajime who just got out of the abyss and heard of Meld’s death, he would have probably just said, “So what?” However, the current him thought it was little regrettable. At the very least, he prayed for their happiness in the next world in his mind.

“So, what happened?”

“That’s…”

Still on his knees, Endou tried to explain the situation to answer Hajime’s question, while he hung his head. However, a hoarse voice interrupted him.

“Please continue your conversation inside. After all, you are my guests.”

The owner of the voice was a powerful man with a good body build, and had a large scar on his left eye who was around 60 years of age. It was obvious his eye had the ability to perceive the situation, polished for years, and ambition was overflowing from his body.

With the previous receptionist by the man's side, Hajime guessed the man must be the head of this guild branch. And because Endou's wails and shouts made the guild atmosphere returned to one of high tension similar to the time Hajime's party entered the hall, he thought this was not an appropriate place to have such a talk, and obediently followed the man.

Endou had probably already made such a commotion earlier, and exposed that something had happened to the Hero's group and the Knights. And that was the cause of the strange atmosphere when Hajime's party entered the guild.

The man Hajime thought of as the branch head grab Endou's arm to force him to stand up and lead them to the guild interior without saying anything. Endou was considerably emotionally unstable, and currently had lost all of his strength.

Because the content would not be something pleasant, Hajime's party moved after the man while expecting the unpleasant.

* * *

"… Demon… race, huh."

Hajime's mutter rang out inside the reception room of Holad branch Adventurer guild. Seated on the sofa before him were the Holad branch's head, Lorr Vauabith, and Endou Kousuke, and seated beside Hajime were Yue, Shia with Tio at Shia's side. Myuu was sitting on Hajime's lap.

Hajime's first response after hearing the situation from Endou was something Endou had said during his explanation. The talk of how the Hero's party was attacked by the demon race and was in pinch, made Endou and Lorr's put on serious expressions, and the room was filled with an oppressive atmosphere.

…Or so it should be, but the little girl sitting on Hajime's lap was munching on the snacks, and it made her cheeks swell up like a squirrel, so she didn't even notice the serious atmosphere. The conversation between Hajime and the others was slightly difficult for Myuu, and she could feel the uneasy atmosphere. However, Hajime gave her a snack so to divert her attention from being uneasy.

"More importantly! What's with that!? Who's that child!? Why is she eating the cake!? Doesn't she understand the situation!? Everyone might have be dead, you know!"

"Eeek!? Papa!"

Unable to endure Myuu's existence, who destroyed the mood in the room, Endou stood up and said with an angry voice while pointing at her. Surprised, Myuu raised a small scream and clung to Hajime.

Naturally, bloodlust far above an ordinary person could emit, overflowed from Hajime. Papa would not forgive his daughter's enemy.

"Bastard… Who are you to snarl at Myuu, ah? AH? Should I kill you?"

"Eeek!?"

Screaming just like Myuu, Endou dropped into the sofa. Because of what Hajime said, "…Really, Hajime is completely a Papa now," or "Before, Hajime-san casually said "our child", right~," or "In the end, this one wonders whether Master will be able to separate from this child once we arrive at Elizen~," could be heard only to be ignored by him. It was more important for him to calm the frightened Myuu.

While Hajime calming Myuu down, he leered at trembling Endou trembling after he had collapsed into the sofa. Lorr entered the conversation with an amazed expression.

"How then, Hajime. I have roughly understood your situation from Ilwa's letter. You've quite the rampage, haven't you?"

"Well, all of them were just the course of events."

Although they were not situations that normally appeared as the course of events, Hajime who shrugged his shoulders as though nothing big had happened, made Lorr curve the edge of his lips, finding it amusing.

"From the letter, with the acceptance of you as "Gold" rank, it was written that you want to be accommodated in the best possible way. I've roughly understood the situation… but to annihilate around 60,000 demonic beasts with just a handful of people, and decimate the underground organization based in Fhuren in just half a day… that is something unbelievable. But for Ilwa to purposely tell me this through a letter… I won't think it is strange if someone said you are actually one of the Demon Lords now."

Lorr's words made Endou opened his eyes wide to show how surprised he was. Even though he thought Hajime must've gotten stronger since he had escaped from the depths of «Orcus Great Dungeon», he thought Hajime was still weaker than himself.

After all, Hajime's class was "Transmutation Master," which was a non-fighting class, and he was also called as "incompetent." Even if someone said he was "Gold" rank, it was just the standard of being an Adventurer in this different world, and couldn't be compared to those summoned here. That's why he thought, at the very least, Hajime should be able to repair the destroyed teleportation circle and become his support in battle.

To begin with, Endou came to the Adventurers' guild to ask high ranked Adventurers to help him in rescuing Kouki's party. Surely even if he could not take them to the dungeon depth, they would at least be able to protect the area around the teleportation circle. And though there were also stationed knights, they would not do anything before they reported this to the Kingdom, and their level

was so low that at most they could do was protect the teleportation circle on 30th floor. He needed Adventurers with at least “Silver” rank to protect the 70th floor’s teleportation circle.

He entered the Adventurer guild with such thoughts and grandly exposed the current situation to those in second floor. He thought he could ask for the Adventurers’ cooperation, for heroes, who were the humanity’s hope, fell into such a predicament along with the annihilation of the Elite Knights. However, in addition to the unexpected request to protect 70th floor’s teleportation circle, made everyone avert their gazes and at the same time, uneasiness about what would happen to the humanity spreaded.

Noticing the commotion, Loor grabbed Endou by the scruff of his neck and dragged him inside to question him, when the receptionist ran inside with Hajime’s status plate.

As such, Endou noticed he had underestimated Hajime’s ability and the possibility that Hajime was even more powerful than him made, Endou astonished when he compared the current and past Hajime.

Even though Endou was stiffened due to the shock, Lorr and Hajime’s talk kept advancing.

“Please don’t say such a stupid thing… How could you think we are as weak as the Demon Lords?”

“Hmm, so even Demon Lords are small fries, huh? What confidence… But, if that’s the truth, I want you to receive a

commission with Holad branch Adventurer guild's head as the referral."

"… Rescuing the heroes, right?"

Endou returned to his senses when he heard the word rescue. Next, he leaned forward and spoke to Hajime.

"Th-That's it! Nagumo! Come with me and help them! If you are that strong, we can surely save everyone!"

"…"

Although Endou's eyes shined because he could see the hope, but Hajime's reaction was an unfavorable one. He was looking at the distance as though he was thinking of something. Endou naturally had thought Hajime would surely help him to rescue the others, so he was perplexed because there was no prompt answer.

"What's with you!? Even now, they might be dying, you know! Don't hesitate! Aren't we comrades!?"

"… Comrades?"

Hajime, who averted his gaze earlier while thinking of something, was once again looking back at the heated up Endou with a cold expression. Endou instinctively backed away due to the coldness in

Hajime's eyes. He hesitated after recalling Hajime's earlier bloodlust, but he obstinately answered because Hajime was a valuable force that could not be missed.

"Y-Yeah. We are comrades! So it's natural to he—…"

"Don't selfishly make me your comrade. Frankly, I only recognize you as nothing but a human 'from the same world,' no more, no less. You are no different than the others."

"Wh—!? Why… why did you say that…"

Hajime's unexpectedly cold words and leer made Endou confused. Hajime resumed thinking, in other words, he thought of the demerits from rescuing Kouki's party.

Just as Hajime said, he recognized the classmates as nothing more than acquaintances. Until now, he neither thought of using his power to return to the way he was in the past, nor revenge. He was truly disinterested and thought them as trivial things.

However, he could not just bluntly answer with a "NO." As for the reason, he connected that answer to the words Aiko said, "lonely way of life."

Furthermore, Hajime recalled the conversation under the moonlight. Having been called "incompetent" and "weakest" in this different world, there was the girl who said to Hajime, "I will

protect Nagumo-kun.” In the end, Hajime was reckless and disappeared as he fell into the abyss, just like what the girl was uneasy about. She had promised “to protect him” to remove her uneasiness, but that promise could not be accomplished. And somehow, Hajime had frequently recalled the time he was about to fall into the abyss and the girl who outstretched her hand with bitter expression after returning to this town.

“Shirasaki… is she safe?”

Hajime muttered and asked the confused Endou. Letting out, “Eh?,” a dubious voice because of the sudden question, Endou panickedly began to speak about Kaori since he thought Hajime would not cooperate if he didn’t say anything.

“Y-Yeah. Shirasaki-san is safe. Rather, we would not have survived if not for her. Jyuugo and Yaegashi-san were dying from the first attack… but Shirasaki-san was truly amazing. Her healing magic was unbelievable, rather… she turned ghastly since the day you fell, you know? She trained so hard, so much that we wanted to stop her… and her aura also changed? She somehow looked mature as though she was always thinking of something, and the fluffy atmosphere around her had disappeared…”

“… I see.”

Hajime only replied as such to the Endou who frantically talked even about the unnecessary things. Thus, Hajime looked at his precious partner who watched him as he scratched his head.

“… If it’s something Hajime wants to do, I’ll follow you to wherever it is.”

“… Yue.”

With affectionate gaze, Yue said so and quietly grasped Hajime’s hand. Hajime returned her grasp, watched her gently, and thanked her.

“M-Me too! I’ll follow Hajime-san to wherever it is! Hajime-san!”

“Hmph, of course this one will, too. Master.”

“Umm, umm, that’s, Myuu, too!”

Because Hajime and Yue began to create their own world, Shia and Tio panicky asserted. Although she didn’t understand it well, Myuu clung and insisted so because she didn’t want to be left behind.

Before them, Endou said, “Eh? What’s with this harem…,” with an amazed expression to which Hajime responded with a leer, while telling his comrades what he wanted to do.

“Everyone, thank you. Although I don’t want to purposely make connection between us and the God chosen Heroes… I have someone I’m indebted to. That’s why, I thought to at least help. Well, if it’s them then they might be able to do something themselves.”

Hajime's real intention was not to help Kouki's party. He didn't want to purposely approach either the Heroes or the Mad God who chose them.

However, he thought to at least show his face to Kaori who pushed herself to find him. In addition, he'd help her if she was truly in a pinch. In other words, he had an obligation to Kaori who wanted to protect him and still believed his survival even now.

He didn't even worry about the risk involved. He had fought the four-eyed wolf in Endou's story, and the Chimeras' strength should be below tenth floor of Abyss dungeon, so there was no problem at all.

"E-Excuse me, so, will you go with him?"

"Ah, branch head Lorr. For now, I also want to request something from you…"

"You don't want to be seen unconditionally helping them by the ones above, right?"

"Yes. There's one more thing. I want you lend me a room for Myuu until we return."

"Ah, I don't mind."

Resultantly, Endou who breathed a sigh of relief because Hajime would come with him, was ignored while Hajime continued his conversation with Lorr.

As expected, he could not just take a child into the depth of the dungeon, so he entrusted Myuu to the guild. Although Myuu fiercely resisted, somehow everyone was able to calm her down, and Tio was entrusted with baby-sitting and guarding her. Finally, Hajime's party were able to depart with Endou as their guide.

"Oi, guide us quickly, Endou."

"Uwah, don't kick my butt! Rather, you are changing too much!"

"How noisy. As for the time, a day… No, let's end this in half a day. Though reluctant, we left Myuu behind, so we need to return quickly. I'm also worried because she's with that pervert."

"…You, so you really are her father… To create a harem of beautiful girls… just what has happened to turn that Nagumo into this…"

While dashing towards the depth of the dungeon, Endou muttered, trying to comprehend something from Hajime's attitude and the surroundings. With such powerful help, Endou's mind regained some composure. If he had the time to talk, he wanted to use it to run faster since he had confidence in his high agility, but it had been smashed to pieces. In addition, Endou was praying for his best

friends' safety.

Arifureta: Volume 8 Chapter 6

Chapter 76 of the Web Novel.

The Hero's Defeat

"Uh…"

"Suzu-chan!"

"Suzu!"

With Suzu raising a groan and slowly opening her eyes, Kaori and Eri who were always beside her, called Suzu's name with anxious voices mixed with relief. Suzu spaced out for a while with only her gaze moving around, and finally opened her mouth.

"I-I don't know this ceiling~."

"Suzu, I know you like acting, but wouldn't it be better if you didn't say something like that at time like this?"

She should be thirsty. However, Suzu desperately said so with hoarse voice, which made Shizuku retorted in a half-amazed, half-praising tone when she heard her. Afterwards, Suzu moistened her throat using the water from the leather flask by her side.

With lovely sound of gulping, Suzu, who sated her thirst, said, “I’m revived! Literally!,” words that couldn’t be taken as a joke, and she tried her best to stand up with Kaori and Eri supporting her. The class’s moodmaker who regained her consciousness from a critical condition, radiated a cheerful atmosphere which made the classmates who had been depressed until now show smiles.

However, the bright atmosphere was very contrary to Suzu’s complexion. She was exhausted and suffered blood loss. With a pale face and thin lines below her eyes just like a bear’s, her smile looked miserable. Some parts of her body were pierced, but it was unmistakably her “strength” to be able to smile as soon as she got up. Shizuku and Kaori watched her with respect.

“Suzu-chan. It’s okay for you to rest some more. After all, your blood shouldn’t have been replenished yet, even if your wounds have recovered…”

“U～n, so that’s why I feel dizzy～. That bastard～, to pierce the beautiful Suzu… even though, “Can I penetrate you now?,” is better to be said in bed!”

“Suzu! That’s vulgar! Be more prudent!”

Suzu said while hatefully gazing at empty space, and Eri scolded Suzu with flushed cheeks. Some of the male students inadvertently, “Bff!?,” but averted their gazes due to Shizuku’s glare.

“Suzu, thank God you woke up. We were worried, you know?”

“Yo, are you really okay? Isn’t your face completely pale?”

Because Suzu suddenly caused a commotion after she woke up, Kouki and Ryuutarou approached her. While being weakened for a period of time as an effect from using “Limit Break,” Kouki became depressed because they were severely beaten. However, he seemed to have recovered somehow since a moderate amount of time had passed after they had retreated and hid where they currently were.

“Morning~, Kouki-kun, Ryuutarou-kun! Looks like we somehow got away, huh? Umm, is everyone saf—… Wait, one is missing…”

“Yeah, it’s Endou. He retreated ahead alone. We think he should be able to break through the floors alone by hiding himself…”

After greeting Kouki and Ryuutarou with a smile, Suzu noticed one person was missing from the surrounding classmates. Suzu had lost her consciousness in the midst of battle, so Kouki and the others answered her doubt while they explained the current situation.

Incidentally, Kondou and Saitou had been de-petrified, woke up earlier than Suzu, and had already been debriefed of the situation.

“I see, looks like a lot of time had passed since Suzu fainted… Ah, that’s right. Kaorin, thanks! Kaorin has become Suzu’s life benefactor!”

“Suzu-chan, it’s my duty to heal everyone. So don’t exaggerate it by calling me your life benefactor because it was a natural thing for me to do.”

“Heh～, even stoic Kaorin is wonderful! Shall we get married?”

“Suzu… it’s eerie if you say that with pale face. For now, shouldn’t you rest some more?”

Suzu was scolded by Eri while she was clinging to Kaori. If she over did it, Shizuku would physically stop her. It was the usual way of things. Even the classmates who wondered whether they’d be able to survive and return to surface again, gradually regained their composure thanks to Suzu and the girls’ conversation that didn’t mind their defeat.

However, the atmosphere which was starting to turn bright was douse with water by a person who always ruin the ambience.

“…What are you grinning about? We almost died, you know? Moreover, our situation hasn’t changed even now! Think of how we can get out of here if you have time to joke around!”

The one who shouted while glaring at Suzu was Kondou Reiichi. And though he didn’t express it, Saitou Yoshiki by his side also watched her with criticizing gaze.

“Oi, Kondou. Can you not say such a thing? Suzu only did this to change the moo—…”

“Shut up! It’s not like you can say anything to me! After all, you lost! I almost died! Shit! What a Hero you are!”

Although Kouki tried to admonish Kondou due to his remark, Kondou suddenly burst like fire that got poured with oil and began to criticize Kouki.

“Bastard… Thanks to whom do you think we could retreat, huh? We could do that because Kouki opened a path for us!”

“To begin with, there’s no need for us to retreat if he wins! More importantly, we obviously had our chance. It would have been all right for us to receive the invitation from Demon Race and defeat them later! But, you selfishly started the fight! Everything is your fault! This is your responsibility!”

This time, Ryuutarou began to admonish such a Kondou. Kondou stood up and confronted Ryuurarou. Sympathizing with Kondou, Saitou and Nakano also stood up and faced Ryuutarou.

“Ryuutarou, I am okay… I’ll accept my responsibility, Kondou. We won’t lose this time! We already understood the characteristics of the demonic beasts, and we won’t get attacked by surprise again. So, we will absolutely win this time!”

Although Kouki made a gesture where he clasped his clenched fist, Saitou muttered with darkened eyes.

“… But, you could not win even with “Limit Break.”

“Th-That’s… i-it’ll be okay now!”

“Why?”

“I’ll use “Divine Might” and attack the Demon Race woman from the beginning. That’s why, if everyone could cover me…”

“But, won’t she know a troublesome attack is coming with such a long chant? Even our enemies will have their own plans, right? Besides, we don’t know if those were all of the demonic beasts she has.”

Even if Kouki said it’d be okay, Kondou and gang complained while beginning to doubt Kouki’s ability, and were looking at him with doubtful eyes. With this, even though Kouki could not help but take responsibility to make sure they win. They would not calm down because of the fact that they had almost died as a result of the enemies’ unbelievable strength and number.

The main cause for them to heat up were because Ryuutarou had a low angry point while Kondou and gang were being belligerent by objecting constantly. Gradually, Ayako, Yoshino, and Nomura tried to stop their quarrel, but a dangerous mood began to drift around.

As such, Ryuutarou began to ready his fists while Kondou readied his spear. Tension immediately filled their location. Kouki shouted, Ryuutarou!, and grip his shoulder to stop him. However, Ryuutarou could not be stopped and veins popped on his head while glaring at Kondou. Even Kondou and gang were partly obstinate about it.

“Everyone, please calm down! No matter what you say, we can only bet on Kouki to survive! We must defeat the Demon Race woman even if Kouki was at the time limit of his “Limit Break.” We can only do that since she won’t let us escape. You understand that, right?”

Shizuku entered between them and frantically tried to persuade them to calm down, but it didn’t work either. Swaying while standing, Suzu seemed to not want to hear what Kondou said even if he apologized. Finally, Kaori thought she needed to restrain everyone and began to prepare her restraining magic… when they heard something.

“Grrrrr…”

“””””” !?”””””””

A growl. A growl so familiar, so low that came from the bottom of abdomen. The appearances of Chimeras and the four-red-eyed wolves crossed their minds. The dangerous mood immediately dissipated and everyone stiffened. Even the smallest breathing seemed to resound, and their breathing became smaller. Their gazes turned towards the passage camouflaged as a wall before

them.

Whoosh! Fwiiish, Whooosh! Fwuuush!

Sounds of scratching and rough nasal breathing could be heard from the wall. Someone was gulping. Even trace of their smells should've been erased by Endou, so the demonic beasts shouldn't be able to perceive that Kouki's party were inside no matter how strong they were. Even though they thought so, they were tensed and unpleasant sweats flowed.

Some time was still needed before they completely recovered. Suzu was not in condition to fight, Kaori and Ayako had used too much magic to heal the others and had hardly recovered. The vanguard group were almost fully recovered, but the magic users in the rear group only had recovered half of their magic power. The healing potions they had also been exhausted, so they still need to wait for sometimes to recover at the earliest.

They could not overlook the holes in terms of roles created by Kaori and Ayako as the healers and the barrier user, Suzu. That's why Kouki's party were hoping they would not be found out now as they watched the wall separating the outside and the hidden room.

The demonic beasts wandered outside for a while, but their presences gradually began to fade before long. Thus, silence returned once again. Even so, everyone was standing still for a while, and breathed great sighs of relief when they knew the demonic beasts had completely disappeared; some of them crumpled on the spot. The extreme tension made their sweats overflow like a flood.

“…We’ll be found out if we keep making a commotion. That’s why, please just calm down and recover for now.”

“Y-Yeah…”

“Y-You are right…”

Shizuku wiped the sweat off her cheek which fell and created weird dripping sound. Kondou and the others replied while stammering and withdrew their arms. It was as though they got doused by cold water.

Having thought the crisis was through, everyone relaxed… and at that moment,

“ROOOOOOARRRRR!!!”

BOOOM!!!

The wall separating the hidden room and the outside was crushed to pieces along with a tremendous roar.

“Uwah!?”

“Kyaaaa!!”

The wall’s fragments were blown like bullets due to the impact into the hidden room, and hit Kondou and Yoshino who were in its trajectory. The two spontaneously fell flat on their butts as they raised screams.

In the next moment, before the dumbfounded Kouki’s party were the incoming blurred spaces whom they still didn’t want to meet.

“Prepare to fight!”

“Damn it! How did they find us!”

While ordering so, Kouki immediately drew and slashed the Chimeras with the Holy Sword. They didn’t move because they would lose sight of the enemies if they distanced themselves from them. As he cursed, Ryuutarou positioned himself before the passage connected to the outside, and tried to prevent the demonic beasts from invading any more than this.

However,

“RooOOoAR!!”

“GROooowwwWL!!”

A Brutal-look-alike immediately hurled its steel-like body like a cannonball into the room. Thus, it grappled into Ryuutarou with tremendous momentum and pushed him down.

Using that chance, tens of black cats dashed into the room and immediately fired tens of tentacles. Fired like a barrage, they mercilessly attacked Kondou and the others who remained on their spots. And though Kondou and the others immediately readied their weapons, the tentacles were too much in number and would skewer them as-is.

?????????? ??

“——”Heaven Interruption”!”

“——”Heaven Interruption”!”

15 shields of light slantly appeared in the space before Kondou and the others and managed to deviate the trajectories of the attacks. To be capable of activating the shields even with such short chants would make anyone marveled. Ten of the shields were Suzu’s, while the other five were Kaori’s.

However, even though they immediately cast them, Suzu’s physical condition was still in a bad shape while Kaori’s magic power was still exhausted. Those facts affected the strenght of the shields.

Whiiiish! Fwooosh! Whiiiish! Fwooosh! Whiiiish! Fwooosh!

They should’ve been able to change the trajectories and endure the

impact, but vigorous attacks from the tentacles broke the shields one after another. Thus, several of the tentacles' trajectories could not be changed by the crushed shields and attacked Nakano and Saitou. The two immediately bend their bodies. Since both were in the rear group, their physical strength weren't that high. Because of that, even though they avoided mortal wound, Nakano shoulder and Saitou's thigh were gouged, and they raised screams as they were thrown to the ground.

"Shinji! Yoshiki! Shit! Daisuke, help them!"

"… Ah, of course."

Always brooding over something since they escaped into the hidden room, Hiyama did not pay much attention to what Kondou said. However, the situation didn't let him say anything otherwise, so he dragged the wounded Nakano and Saitou towards Suzu's side. Even though her physical condition was not good, the area around Suzu, whose magic power still had a lot remaining, was the safest. Besides, they would be easily healed by Kaori at Suzu's side.

"Kuh, Kouki! Use "Limit Break" and get outside! We will do something about these guys inside this room!"

"But, Suzu and the others cannot move…"

"We will face them as-is! Please! Break through them and kill the Demon Race woman!"

“Kouki! Leave this place to us! I absolutely won’t let them die!”

“…Okay! I will leave this place to you! “Limit Break”!”

After thinking about Shizuku and Ryuutarou’s words for a moment, he thought it was certainly the only way to break through this situation. With a resolute expression, Kouki activated “Limit Break” for the second time today. The reason “Limit Break” must not be used for more than once a day was because it put considerable burden into the body. That’s why, “Limit Break” which usually had an eight minute limit, but it might be shorter now. Expecting that, Kouki would ignore the others and only concentrate on defeating the Demon Race woman, he went out of the hidden room.

Going out of the room into the huge octagonal room, before Kouki’s eyes were a large amount of demonic beasts. And within the stationary demonic beasts stood the Demon Race woman looking at him with cold eyes, and a white crow on her shoulder. The inside of Kouki’s mind was boiling with a sense of mission to save his comrades and anger that they were put into such a predicament. Thus, he glared straight at the Demon Race woman.

“Hmph, you made me waste too much time. I also have other missions too…”

“Shut up! I will surely defeat you! Prepare yourself!”

Declaring so, Kouki used short chant, and magic power was immediately sent into the Holy Sword. “Divine Might” would normally reach the Demon Race woman, but even so, he used the

chant omission version of “Divine Might” since he believed it would be able to open a path for him.

However, the Demon Race woman showed a smile before the Holy Sword, whose radiance increased, and she ordered the Brutal-look-alike standing by near her to drag something from the back.

Kouki put a dubious expression at first which then turned into an aghast expression when he saw that “something.” He instinctively lowered the Holy Sword with eyes wide opened and called his name with a trembling voice.

“… M-Meld-san?”

That’s right, there was the dying Meld whose limbs were crushed and whole body drenched in blood being dragged by the Brutal-look-alike by the scruff of his neck. With a glance, his whole body was limp and seemed to have died, but sometimes small groans arose and demonstrated that he was alive.

“Y-You! Let go of Meld-san—!?”

Kouki was enraged because of Meld’s state, and in a split moment, he tried to rush towards the Demon Race woman, losing himself. Suddenly, a huge shadow shrouded over Kouki as though it had been waiting for such exquisite timing. Hah, before Kouki noticed it and turned his gaze, there was the spectacle’s wall-like fist approaching him with tremendous momentum that made even the air exploded.

BaAAaaM!!!

Although Kouki spontaneously used his left arm to guard, the fist swung with tremendous force easily crushed his guard, and Kouki's left arm and body received a powerful impact. Kouki flew towards a wall and crashed into it with tremendous speed incomparable to being run over by a dump truck. The wall behind him was crushed radically by the impact.

"GaaAH!"

Because of the impact he had taken, Kouki air was released from his lungs, and he slipped down from the wall, in all fours. Kouki desperately tried to support his body using his healthy right arm, but a lot of blood flowed from his mouth. The earlier attack had most likely damaged his organs. He might have died instantly if it wasn't for the skill derived from "Physical Resistance," "Mitigation of Impact."

In addition, because of a concussion to his head, he desperately tried to understand the situation even with an unfocused gaze. Then, he saw it. A three meter, huge demonic beast was in the location where Kouki was before, with its fist thrusted.

It had a horse-like head where fangs grew, four thick heavy arms growing from its muscular body, and its lower half was that of a monstrous gorilla. Glaring at Kouki with bloodshot eyes, steam gushed out from the long horse-like mouth every time it breathed. Its atmosphere was obviously different from the demonic beasts he had faced until now.

The horsehead withdrew its fist and immediately rushed out while firing a dense bloodlust to the still unable-to-stand Kouki mercilessly. Jumping only a little away from the place where Kouki was crouching, it swung its fist down with tremendous momentum towards Kouki. Because of the warning from his instincts, Kouki laid on the ground and rolled over, desperately getting out of his location.

KABOOOM!!!

Immediately, the horsehead's fist pierced the ground and at the same time, a reddish black ripple extended on the ground along with a roar. The destruction was just like an explosion. This was the horsehead's peculiar magic, "Magic Shock Wave." It was an ability to convert magic power into a shockwave. However, as simple as it might be, it was an immensely powerful peculiar magic.

Due to the skill derived from "Physical Resistance," "Recovery Rate Increased," Kouki somehow recovered from his head concussion. He desperately stood up and readied the Holy Sword. At that time, the horsehead had already approached before him and swung its fist once again.

With a crushed left arm, Kouki used Holy Sword as a shield and the impact received by his right arm blew him away again. Afterwards, even though Kouki managed to avoid a mortal wound, the four arms sent out "Magic Shock Wave" with all of their might, and he, whose movement had slowed down due to the damage from the first impact, couldn't counter attack at all.

“Kuuu! What’s with this thing’s strength! Even though I should be strengthened by “Limit Break”!”

“RUUUUAAAA!!”

With pained expression, Kouki was frustrated because the horsehead demonic beast could overpower him who was under “Limit Break,” and he went for a counterattack, prepared for damages while thinking he couldn’t let it continue.

However…

THUD!

“Kh!?”

Right before he began, the limit of Kouki’s “Limit Break” had arrived, and power suddenly left him. Because he used it twice in such a short time, he was attacked by powerlessness incomparable to what he felt earlier, and he fell on his knee with no power entering his legs.

The horsehead didn’t miss that chance. With him suddenly losing his power and balance, Kouki was in a hopeless situation as the horsehead’s fist, bam!, hit his abdomen with a sound of impact.

“GAaAH!”

Splurting blood, Kouki's body was made into ‹ shape, blown away, and crashed into the wall once again. Being weakened thanks to the side effect of "Limit Break," Kouki's consciousness was drifting away. Being mortally injured, he fell down without even twitching. Rather, it was strange for him not to die instantly in his current state. Perhaps the horsehead was taking it easy so he wouldn't.

The horsehead approached Kouki and lifted him by grabbing the back of his neck. The unconscious and completely powerless Kouki was hung by the horsehead to show his state to the Demon Race woman. The Demon Race woman nodded in satisfaction and ordered the demonic beasts that rushed into the hidden room to withdraw.

After a while, Shizuku and the others went out with full caution.Their expressions were dyed in despair when they saw the powerless Kouki being lifted by the huge horse-headed demonic beast they had never seen before.

Arifureta: Volume 8 Chapter 7

Chapter 77 of the Web Novel.

Accompanied By A Red Thunder

“It’s a lie… right? How can Kouki… lose?”

“N-No way…”

“N-No… w-why…”

Coming out from the hidden room, Kouki’s comrades were bewildered in seeing him being hung, and they uttered incoherent words. Even Shizuku, Kaori, and Suzu were speechless. Towards the classmates who had lost their fighting spirit, the Demon Race woman spoke with a cold attitude.

“Hmm, it looks like I’ll be able to catch you guys easily. I… have underestimated you brats, but it looks like it’ll work out just fine.”

With a pale expression, Shizuku asked the Demon Race woman with courageous tone.

“… What did you do?”

“Nn? It’s this, you know this.”

After replying to the question, the Demon Race woman turned her gaze towards Commander Meld who was gripped by a Brutal-look-alike even now. Following her gaze, Shizuku came to understand the moment she saw the dying Commander Meld. Commander Meld was used to divert Kouki’s attention. If his acquaintance was caught and was dying, Kouki would surely react to it. Furthermore, he would’ve considerably lost his composure.

The Demon Race woman had most likely to understood Kouki’s straight forward character from their previous fight. Thus, using Chimera’s peculiar ability, she hid a strong demonic beast who aimed at the moment Kouki jumped in anger.

“… So? What do you want from us? You must want something since you’re purposely letting us live and started to converse with us, right?”

“Ah, as expected, you’re the one who can understand situation the best. What, it’s not such a special conversation. When I saw you guys earlier, I thought to once again invite you guys. Look, before, it was this Hero-kun who selfishly decided everything, right? And, there are also excellent people among you, so I want ask you again. So? What do you think?”

Some people reacted to the Demon Race woman’s words. Because of that, Shizuku narrowed her eyes and questioned the woman again.

“… What about Kouki?”

“Fufu, what a fast learner… Sorry, but I can’t let Hero-kun alive. He didn’t want to come to our side, so it’s impossible to persuade him, right? After all, he is the self-contained type. That’s why I don’t have any reason to keep such a dangerous creature alive.”

“… Isn’t that the same with us?”

“Of course; why did you think I let you live even though I know it’ll only make me anxious of my back?”

“Haven’t you thought that we might joined now and betray you later?”

“Naturally, I have thought that. That’s why I’ll make you wear collars. Ah, there’s no need to worry, it’s only make you unable to rebel against us. No one will be deprived of their freedoms.”

“That’s just like slaves with high degree of freedom. What you mean is we will keep our free will, but we won’t be able to harm you.”

“That’s right. It helps me that you’re quick to understand. Also, it’s good that this conversation is going somewhere until the one with Hero-kun.”

Although the classmates were silently listening to the conversation between Shizuku and the Demon Race, they were also looking at each other with fear-stricken eyes and full of worries. If they did not accept the invitation from Demon Race, then nine out of ten they would be killed by the demonic beasts that were even difficult for Kouki to defeat, but they would not be able to fight against Demon Race again if they sided with Demon Race and wore the collar.

In other words, they would no longer be “God’s Apostles.” If it turned to that, would Church of the Saints whom they had been summoned to protect became useless… and, would it be possible for them to return to their original world…

No matter what option they chose, they could not see a bright future. However…

“I-I think we should accept that person’s invitation!”

Among the silent crowd, Eri unexpectedly desperately spoke while trembling. Thus, the classmates opened their eyes wide in surprise, and carefully paid attention to her. To such an Eri, Ryuutarou shouted back with face red in anger.

“Eri, you! So, you are going to abandon Kouki!”

“Hih!?”

“Ryuutarou, please calm down! Eri, why do you think so?”

Ryuutarou’s attitude made Eri frightened, and she stepped back as a result. However, Shizuku admonished Ryuutarou and was somehow able to stop him. Thus, Eri took a deep breath and spoke her mind with tightly clenched fists.

“I-I just… don’t want everyone to die… Even I don’t know… what to do with Kouki-kun… ugh, gulp…”

Eri spun her words with all of her might with tearing streaming down her eyes. Seeing her, the other party members’ hearts were shaken. Thus, one person who agreed with Eri appeared.

“I also agree with Nakamura. Our lost has already been decided; between annihilation and survival, there’s no need to hesitate, right?”

“Hiyama… you mean, you don’t care what happen to Kouki, huh? Huh?”

“Then, Sakagami, are you trying to do double suicide with Kouki who could not fight anymore? And with all of us involved?”

“That’s not it! As if I’d do that!”

“Then please shut your mouth if you don’t have any alternative. Right now, it should take precedence on how to survive by ourselves.”

With Hiyama’s remark, the atmosphere turned into one where it looked like it was necessary for them to accept the invitation. And just like what Hiyama said, they only had one choice if they wanted to survive.

However, they could not just choose that since they felt guilty, thinking, ‘Is it really okay for us to survive while Kouki gets killed? It was as though they were boldly sacrificing Kouki for their survival.

To their dilemma, the Demon Race woman made another proposal with such perfect timing.

“Hmmm, if you guys are that worried about Hero-kun… shall I keep him alive? Naturally, a collar with stronger effect than yours will be put on him. But, I want all of you to side with Demon Race first.”

Shizuku secretly clicked her tongue when she heard the proposal. It was because she had guessed since the beginning that the Demon Race woman would propose it. It was strange for Kouki to be kept alive if she had already decided to kill him. The woman only had to kill him if there was no need for discussion after all.

That’s why by not killing him and keeping him alive were all for this moment. The Demon Race woman had likely acknowledged

that Kouki and the others were useful after the last fight. However, she was convinced she could not make Kouki waver even through talking. But the others didn't know of that. So, she planned to draw in the others aside from Kouki.

First, she did not kill Kouki to not raise the animosity of the others. Second, she told them to make a choice while she cornered them between choice of death or survival. Third, she guided them to think "if we do that," and she chose that time to erase the problem from their thought.

Actually, by making the best use of Kouki, the atmosphere changed to one where they thought it'd be okay to side with Demon Race if they survive. Though in reality, they didn't have any guarantee Kouki would be kept alive. Even if they regretted if he was killed after this, they could no longer act against the Demon Race.

Shizuku noticed that, but she kept silent as she told herself they currently could do nothing but to side with Demon Race if they want to survive. There should be a way to save Kouki as long as they were alive.

There were huge merits for the Demon Race woman if she got her hand on Shizuku and the others. First, needless to say, it'll give an impact to the human's side. After all, the "God's Apostles" who were humanity's hope are siding with Demon Race. That impact… no, it was much more like despair will be a huge advantage to the Demon Race.

Second, she would get new battle force. Having come to «Orcus Great Dungeon», the Demon Race woman's real purpose was to conquer the dungeon and bring back the power inside. Though up

until now, it was at the level where she could easily sweep the floor with the demonic beasts she had on hand, but it couldn't be said that she'd be able to keep it up. It would be a good thing to obtain Shizuku and the others as fighting force to replenish the demonic beasts killed by Kouki's party.

If this keeps up, she would obtain Shizuku and the others. The Demon Race woman floated a faint smile as she realized the mood.

However, her smile was immediately erased by the pained voice that suddenly rang out.

"E-Everyone… this is bad… please run away…"

"Kouki!"

"Kouki-kun!"

"Amanogawa!"

The voice's source was the hanged Kouki. All of his comrades' gazes turned to him.

"… Don't believe her… she killed… Alan-san and the other knights… don't… be fooled… you'll be used as slaves… to fight humans… so run away… I am… okay… just… escape by yourself…"

With feeble breathing, Kouki told the danger of the deal and insisted for them to leave him and bet on running away, which once again shook the hearts of the classmates.

"…In this situation, just how many do you think will survive? Just look at the reality already! We already lost! Even the knights… were killed! So there's no other choice! We can do nothing but accepting the invitation if we want to survive!"

Hiyama's angry voice rang out. He angrily looked at Kouki who still didn't come to terms with the situation. Hiyama certainly wanted to survive. At worst, he would make sure Kaori and himself survive even if the others didn't. However, the possibility of doing that if he bet on escaping would be too low.

If he went to the Demon Race side, there's enough possibility of being promoted o an important position if he displayed his usefulness, and he'd be able to obtain Kaori. Naturally, he'd limit her freedom using the collar. Hiyama did not care whether she had free will or not. He'd be satisfied as long as he made Kaori his.

Because of Hiyama's angry voice, the others were charmed by the more certain and nearer future.

At that moment, a pained but powerful voice rang inside the room. Even though it was a small voice, it resounded well to others. It was a voice that had encouraged them many times in the battlefields. The person calmly judged any kind of situations, said words without any hesitation, and a model for them who also had a reliable back. For everyone, he was like a big brother and even a

father they were fond of. Meld's voice rang out.

"Guh… you guys… you only need to think on how to survive! … Advance on the path you believed in! … I am sorry involving you… to our war… Even though the time I spent with you isn't that long… I've regretted involving you… That's why, live and return to your world… no need to worry about human race… In the first place… this war should be fought by the human in this world!"

Meld's words weren't words of a Herrlicht Kingdom's Commanding Knight. They were words of a man, Meld Loginz, his true feelings as he cast aside his position. He exposed his feelings because he realized here would be the end for him.

Kouki and the others had their eyes wide opened while muttering Meld's name and Meld shook off the Brutal-look-alike while a light shone from his whole body. Then, he immediately grappled the Demon Race woman.

"You demon… let's die together!"

"… That is… hee~, self-destruction? How brave. I can say I don't hate it."

"Shut it!"

The light wrapping Meld was similar to Kouki's "Limit Break" in a

glance while magic power gushed out of his body. However, it was actually not from his body but the crystal hanging on his neck.

Seeing that, the Demon Race woman instantly saw through his personality and satisfyingly praised him.

The crystal's name was "Last Loyalty," an evil tool to self-destruct just like the Demon Race woman said. Someone with high position in the Kingdom and Church of the Saints naturally carried important information with him. And because there's magic capable of reading one's memory in dark attributed magic, that person would be forced to carry the crystal when he went to the frontline. It would be used in time of emergence so the memory could not be read, along with the intention of involving the enemy with the self-destruction.

Meld's last attack that risked his life made Kouki's party screamed out his name. However, unlike them, the Demon Race woman was still calm even though she'd be swallowed by the explosion and die.

Thus the "Last Loyalty" Meld carried increased its shine further, and one sentence was muttered right before it activated.

"Devour it, Absod."

Immediately, after the Demon Race woman's voice rang out, the "Last Loyalty" on its limit let out tremendous lights, and lost its shine.

“Wh-!? What’s happen!”

If one looked carefully, the overflowing lights were flowing into a certain direction. Meld frantically moved only his gaze towards that direction while still pinning the Demon Race woman, and there was the six-legged turtle shaped demonic beast whose opened mouth was inhaling the lights wrapping Meld.

The six-legged turtle demonic beast was called Absod. Its peculiar magic was “Magic Storage.” It was a skill to freely take and stock magic inside its body. On the other hand, it could not use the stored magic if more than one magic if it took different elements. It only had the ability of letting out the magic again by compressing it from its mouth. However, the storage could even store high-ranked magic. It was a natural enemy for people who fight using magic.

The light wrapping Meld from “Last Loyalty” rapidly lost, and it exhausted all its powers and became a normal crystal. Suddenly, an impact from an attack hit Meld who was flabbergasted because his last struggle had been obstructed in an unexpected way, but the impact wasn’t that strong. What is it?, Meld looked down towards his abdomen where the impact came from.

A reddish brown blade could be seen. Accurately, a blade of sand had pierced through Meld’s abdomen from his back. The blade piercing him from behind had blood dripping at the tip.

“… Meld-san!”

Kouki shouted Meld's name without minding his vomited blood. Meld reacted to his call and the gaze on his abdomen shifted to Kouki. He then frowned he moved his mouth to say, "Sorry," while revealing a mortified smile.

Immediately, the sand blade swung horizontally and Meld was blown away. Just like a powerless doll, thud!, he was thrown to the ground. The pool of blood spread little by little. Anyone see it would think of it as a mortal wound. It was already a miracle he was capable of moving while covered in wounds, but everyone knew that this time it was the true end.

Even though she understood she would not make it in time, Kaori immediately used ranged recovery magic on Meld. Although the amount of bleeding had slightly decreased, Kaori could not block Meld's wound since she herself hardly have any magic power.

"Uu, please! Be healed!"

Even as she fell to her knee due to the severe exhaustion from magic power depletion, Kaori desperately continued using healing magic.

"I never thought he'd be able to stand up and pinned me with such wounds. As expected of the Kingdom's Knight Leader. He's worthy of praise. However, this is the end… this'll be your last. So, what do you think?"

The Demon Race woman glared at Kouki and the others as she swung the sand blade dyed in red. Seeing someone close to them dying once again, everyone, except some, were trembling. Even if they didn't want to admit it, they'd be the next to die if they did not accept the Demon Race woman's proposal.

Representing the others, Hiyama was about to say they accept the proposal. However, at that time,

"… –me."

Kouki, who powerlessly tried to escape from being hung by the horsehead, muttered something with a small voice. Even though he shouldn't be able to create any miracle since he covered in wounds, Hiyama swallowed his words. He somehow could not ignore the pressure coming from Kouki.

"Ha? What did you say? So, you want to die."

The Demon Race woman heard Kouki's mutter, she snorted, and asked him thinking it was just another rave. Kouki raised his cast down gaze, and his straight glare pierced the Demon Race woman.

The Demon Race woman instinctively held her breath when she saw Kouki's glare. After all, the color of his irises had changed to silvery white as it shone. Instinctively backing away due to an unknown pressure, she ordered the horsehead according to the warning her instinct was telling her. She instinctively realized it was not the time to think about the advantage and disadvantage of gaining Shizuku and the others.

“Ahatd! Kill him!”

“RoOoOoAaR!!”

The horsehead nameded Ahatd faithfully executed the Demon Race woman’s order. It tried to crush the suspended Kouki’s sides using two fists equipped with “Magic Shock Wave.”

However, at that moment,

CLiiIIInnNG!!

Tremendous light overflowed from Kouki. It became a torrent and rose into the ceiling just like a tornado. Next, Kouki swung his right fist towards Ahatd’s arm that was grabbing onto him, SNaaaAAAAP!, and the arm was easily crushed.

“ROooOOAR!!”

With a roar different from a while ago, Ahatd inadvertently dropped Kouki, and Kouki moved to make a roundhouse kick as though he could not feel his injury.

ThUuUumpP!!

Cannon-like impact sound rang when the kick hit, Ahatd's huge body was bent into < and was blown towards the wall behind with an extraordinary momentum. Ahatd, who was crushed into the wall accompanied with a thunderous roar, could not move well its body thanks to the impact, desperately trying to slip out of the wall but resulted in nothing.

With a swaying body, Kouki picked up the dropped Holy Sword and glared at the Demon Race woman with a piercing gaze that could almost kill. At the same time, similar torrent that of a tonado rose and began to envelope Kouki's body.

A skill derived from "Limit Break," "Supreme Break." If the normal "Limit Break" increased the basic states by three times within the time limit, "Supreme Break" was higher skill, and basic stats were multiplied by five. However, he had to use limit break to now forcibly dragged out his power. That's why the current Kouki only had 30 seconds until the limit. The effective time had been cut greatly because of the side effect.

However, without minding that, Kouki rushed towards the Demon Race woman in anger. The only thing in his mind was to beat Meld's enemy. Only revenge.

The Demon Race woman raised a panicked expression and ordered the surrounding demonic beasts to attack Kouki. Chimeras were sneaked attacking, the black cats were firing their tentacles, and the Brutal-look-alike swung their maces. However, Kouki ignored those demonic beasts. Without swinging Holy Sword, he kept advancing, and raised angry cry towards where the Demon Race woman was.

“Bitch-! How dare you do that to Meld-san-!!”

“Tch!”

Kouki unhesitatingly swung down the Holy Sword that was held in upper stance. The Demon Race woman clicked her tongue and she immediately densified the sand into a shield… but cladded in torrent of light, the Holy Sword easily cut through the shield and slashed the Demon Race woman behind it.

Although she was not cut in two; she backed away and created the sand shield, the Demon Race woman had a deeply cut diagonally on her body, and blown backward, spraying blood.

Her back crashed into the wall behind, the Demon Race woman skidded down from the crushed wall, and Kouki approached her as he shook of the blood off the Holy Sword.

“What luck… to have the situation reversed just like this… It’s as if I am looking at a cheap drama.”

Having the table reversed thanks to him awakening his hidden power due to him being in a pinch, made the Demon Race woman say sarcastic words while her wandering gaze was looking at the approaching Kouki in resignation.

Even though the white crow on her side activated its peculiar magic, her wound was too deep that it could not be healed immediately, and Kouki won't give her such a time either. It was a true checkmate, and the Demon Race woman endured the severe pain, moved her right hand, and took out a locket pendant from her breast pocket.

Seeing that, Kouki sharpened his expression, thinking it was the same self-destruction tool similar to the one Meld used, and he suddenly dashed out. Regardless of the Demon Race woman's death, he could not let the explosion swallow his comrades. That's why, I will defeat her before it activates! He attacked to stop her.

However…

"I am sorry… I am going to die before you… I love you, Mikhail…"

Looking at the locket pendant in her hand dearly, the Demon Race woman muttered, which made Kouki inadvertently stopped the Holy Sword. Due to the attack not being delivered, the Demon Race woman dubiously raised her face and she noticed the Holy Sword had stopped just a few millimeters overhead.

Kouki expression was aghast as he looked down at the Demon Race woman with wide-open eyes. His eyes expressed, but when he noticed something, it generated fear and hesitation. Seeing his eyes, the Demon Race woman realized the thing that made him stopped his sword and watched him with a condemning gaze. Her gaze made Kouki shaken further.

“… I am amazed… Did you notice it only now? That you are going to kill a ‘person.’?”

“Kh!?”

That’s right, for Kouki, the Demon Race was a cruel and cowardly higher ranked demonic beasts. It also meant they were recognized as existences evolved from demonic beasts, that was what the Ishtar had taught him about the Demon Race. Actually, they were recognized as such because they were accompanied by the demonic beasts, their slaves. However, just like a normal human, they love and loved, desperately tried to survive for the sake of something. But Kouki never thought he was going to fight “people.” In a way, it could be said he unconsciously did not want to think so…

The recognition was overturned when the Demon Race woman dearly called the name of her loved person. Whether he liked it or not, the one he was fighting was not a demonic beast. He noticed she was in truth a “person” just like him. He recognized what he was trying to do was “murder.”

“Surely, you did not admit us as “people”… What arrogance.”

“N-No… I, I didn’t know…”

“Hah, isn’t it you “did not try to know”?”

“I, I…”

“See? So, what’s wrong? After all, what you’re doing is not fighting but “hunting,” right? There’s one animal before you here, you know? Even though you have thought like that until now…”

“… L-let’s just talk… surely if we talk…”

Kouki said as he lowered Holy Sword. Demon Race woman looked at him with pure scorn, and she shouted an order instead of answering him.

“Ahatd! Aim at the swordswoman! The others, attack!”

Having recovered from the impact, Ahatd approached Shizuku with tremendous momentum, exactly what the Demon Race woman had ordered. Within Kouki’s party, although her charisma to lead people could not be compared to him, to excel in making calm judgement of the situation made her the most troublesome enemy, so Shizuku was the first to be targeted.

The others demonic beasts also began attacking the other party members. Rather than the merits gained by making them betray their allies with attached collars, she judged, because of his last attack, it was necessary to kill Kouki. The Demon Race woman felt Kouki’s latest attack was a threat.

“Wh-, why!”

“You’re a boy without any self-awareness… we are at “war!” You who possessed huge power with immature mind is too dangerous! You are going to die here no matter what! Look, your comrades will be annihilated if you don’t help them!”

Kouki shouted at the Demon Race woman who ignored his suggestion, but the woman didn’t care at all.

Next, Kouki turned around because of the woman’s words, and at the same time, Shizuku was blown away and she crashed into the ground. Ahatd was already a monster that had already far surpassed the strong demonic beasts. It overpowered Kouki who was using “Limit Break” even if it was just a surprise attack. So, Shizuku should not be able to fight it by herself.

Kouki turned pale and used the power from “Supreme Break” to instantly move between Ahatd and Shizuku, and caught the “Magic Shock Wave” attack. Next, he counter-attacked by swinging Holy Sword which cut off its arms.

However, by the time he was before its bosom to finish it off with a stab, just like before, he fell to his knees, lost his strength, and fell forward.

“Supreme Limit” had reached its time limit. It was the worst case scenario. Not only was weakened because of the after effect he had accumulated one impossible plight after another, he also could not move his body as though he was paralyzed.

“A-At Such a time!”

“Kouki!”

Covering Kouki, Shizuku slashed towards the wound Ahatd had on its arm that was cut off. Unable to calm down after its wound was slashed, Ahatd screamed and retreated. At that moment, Shizuku grabbed and threw Kouki to where their comrades were.

With Kouki incapable of moving, his comrades could only defend against the encircling demonic beasts. Then… I must do something! Shizuku aimed at the Demon Race woman. Her gaze unmistakably carried killing intent.

“…Heh~. You seem be conscious about the murder. Rather, aren’t you the one most suitable to be called as Hero?”

“… I don’t care. It is our fault Kouki did not realize it. That’s why I will pay for that debt!”

Completely healed by the white crow’s peculiar magic, the Demon Race woman stood up steadily and commented on Shizuku actions.

Shizuku should have known Kouki’s straightforward character, and how deeply he sets his heart on something. She gritted her teeth because she felt responsible that it was only until now that Kouki realized they were killing people, and how he didn’t realize their true enemies during this war.

Shizuku had no experience of murder, and she felt she did not want to experience it either. However, she was prepared such a day would come if she was going into a war. By learning swordsmanship, the “heaviness” of hurting people was driven into her.

However, now that the time has come, her resolution was easily shaken because of fear neither from the shame nor honour, but because she wanted to cry due to the thing she was going to do. Even so, she bit her lip and gritted her teeth to desperately suppress her fear.

Thus, she took a stance as she activated “No Beat” to kill the Demon Race woman using the Godspeed from the sword drawing technique. However in that moment, a chill ran along her spine because her instinct warned her to imminent danger. Immediately, from the side of the location where she jumped back from, a black cat’s tentacles was fired.

“I never told the other demonic beasts to not aim at you. Do you think you can kill me with Ahatd and other demonic beasts as your enemies.”

“Kuh.”

Saying, “Of course I am also going to kill you,” the Demon Race woman began to chant. Shizuku somehow managed to break through the waves of attacks from the demonic beasts using acceleration and deceleration without preliminary action of “No Beat,” but her expression was gradually dyed in despair when she tried to move before the Demon Race woman through an opening.

The most difficult was that Ahatd had speed similar to Shizuku. The sturdy and gigantic figure was certainly seen by Shizuku, so even if she used the chance to jump towards the Demon Race woman, its swung fist give an explosion-like impact that would immediately reach Shizuku.

Shizuku was a swordsman who specialized in speed, so her defense was extremely brittle. Evasion and parry were the basic of her defense. Besides, damages would accumulated little by little from “Magic Shock Wave”‘s after effect. Also, she could neither completely evade nor parry.

Following that, Shizuku’s movement had slightly become duller because of the accumulated damages. And that was fatal in a fight to death such as this.

WHHAAAAAM!!

“Aghh!!”

Although she immediately used the sword and sheath as shields, Ahatd’s fist crushed Shizuku’s partner and hit her shoulder. Having blown parallel to the ground, forcefully crashing, and continued skidding on the ground, Shizuku laid down helplessly. The arm on her right shoulder was bent into an impossible angle. It was completely crushed. And because the impact was passed into her body, she sometimes coughed up blood.

“Shizuku-chan!”

Kaori called Shizuku with tone overflowed with uneasiness, but Shizuku could not move at all even as she gripped the handle of her broken sword while crouching.

At that time, the things about her comrades, formation, and her exhausted magic power, there was be no meaning for her to come to Shizuku’s side, but other logical reasons had completely disappeared from her mind. Kaori’s only thought was she “must go to her important best friend’s side.”

Kaori dashed out due to impulse. Her body was swaying and her feet weren’t steady because she hardly had any magic power. Although there were voices behind that tried to stop her, they did not reach Kaori’s ears. She was only trying her best to recklessly rush towards Shizuku. Naturally, the demonic beasts did not overlook the defenseless Kaori, and merciless attacks poured towards her.

However, all of those attacks were received by shining shields. Moreover, the numerous shields were standing just like a passage between Kaori and Shizuku.

“Ehehe. As expected, being alone is unpleasant.”

Suzu said with a pale expression. She held out her right hand straight towards Shizuku, and used all of her shields to make a beeline between Kaori and Shizuku. A faint smile floated on her face.

Suzu had realized it herself. Realized they could not survive at all. That's why, she thought of using her magic to allow her to be together with the best friends she loved even in the last moment. Naturally, the defense on the other comrades had become thinner as the effect… so Suzu, "I am sorry," apologized in her mind, and continued to put up her shields for Kaori and Shizuku.

With Suzu's shields, Kaori reached Shizuku with only few wounds. Then, she embraced Shizuku's body tightly.

"K-Kaori… what are you doing… Get back, hurry. It's dangerous here."

"Uun. It is the same anywhere. That's why, it's okay for me to be by Shizuku-chan's side."

"… I am sorry. I can't win."

"Me, too, I am sorry I can't really do anything. I have hardly any magic power."

Supporting Shizuku, Kaori was frowning while smiling while using her magic to lessen Shizuku's pain. Shizuku on the other hand, used her solid right arm to grasp the hand Kaori was using to support her, and sported a troubled smile.

A shadow appeared before the two. It was Ahatd. With bloodshot eyes, it approached and looked down at Kaori and Shizuku. “RoOoOaR!!,” it raised its characteristic roar and swung its thick arm.

Unbeknownst to them, Suzu’s shields had been put between Ahatd, and Kaori and Shizuku to interrupt it from coming any closer. However, it just ignore such barriers. It was probably because it was convinced that its swung fist would easily destroy the shields just like papers and use the shockwave to crush Kaori and Shizuku.

Currently, with the iron hammer of death swinging before them, various scenes passed through Kaori’s mind. “Ah, I wonder is this the revolving lantern?,” and she strangely calmed down, but Kaori who was flooded with memories had her heart shaken by the latest scene that appeared.

It was the tea party under the moonlight. The memories of the two conversing. The night when she said a vow. The disappeared him who made a troubled smile. How she began to realize her “love” once he disappeared. How she chased after him, believing in his survival.

However, those would also end here. “In the end, I was once again unable to hold up my promise,” thinking so, tears flowed on Kaori’s cheeks before she was aware of it.

First, I want to call out to him if we ever meet again, Kaori thought so. With such a wish, at the very least, I will call his name at the end… and she naturally said.

“… Hajime-kun.”

At that moment.

KABOoOoOM!!

The ceiling above Ahatd fell with a roaring sound, and at the same time, a huge, jet-black stake flew out with an extreme power cladded in red thunder.

Raising sparks, the jet-black stake pierced through Ahatd as though it was a tofu, and it then pierced and was stuck on the ground.

With length around 120 centimeters, the huge stake buried itself into the ground while releasing red sparks. Flesh and blood scattered from the center where Ahatd’s remains were with its original form nowhere to be seen. The spectacle made Kaori, Shizuku, and of course Kouki’s party, the demonic beasts attacking them, and the Demon Race woman stiffened.

A silent unbecoming of a battlefield ruled the room. No one, not even a thing understood what had happened as they stood in bewilderment. Suddenly, a shadow jumped down from the opened ceiling. The person landed and lightly trampled down on the Ahatd’s remains with his back before Kaori and Shizuku, and when he got off it, the person glared at the surroundings.

When he looked over his shoulder, he saw Kaori and Shizuku who

were embracing each other.

The moment the person turned around, their eyes met, and a lightning ran through Kaori's body. Her heart had been cold accompanied by sorrow, no, probably it was freezing since the day her important person disappeared, but a sudden fire lighted it and heated it up Thu-thump, thu-thump. Her heart began to throb intensely.

"…Your relationship is good as usual, you two."

The person said with a wry smile, and Kaori's mind was filled with delight even before she could think about it.

The hair color was different, the aura was different, the tone was different, and the appearance was different. However, she knew. It is him. It is he whose survival she believed in while she looked for him.

That's right,

"Hajime-kun!"

Arifureta: Volume 8 Chapter 8

Chapter 78 of the Web Novel.

The Peerless Incompetent

“Eh? Hajime-kun? Wait, Nagumo-kun? Eh? What? What do you mean?”

Kaori’s ecstatic shout made Shizuku, who was by her side, confused and looked alternately between Kaori and Hajime. Apparently, Kaori was able to see through the white haired, eye-patched, black-coated person before her as Hajime with just a single glance, but Shizuku was still unable to recognize him.

However, when she saw the boy’s face who was looking back over his shoulder with a wry smile, it immediately overlapped with Nagumo Hajime in her memory, and Shizuku, with widened eyes, raised a surprised voice.

“Eh? Eh? Really? Is he really Nagumo-kun? Eh? What? What’s really happening here?”

“Well, just calm down, Yaegashi. Aren’t calm, cool, and collected your main selling point?”

The chain of events happened after she, Shizuku, just like Kaori, was prepared to die which made her perplexed and she forgot her

pain. Admonishing her as he said Shizuku's name, Hajime suddenly looked overhead, feeling their presences. Thus, the falling blond-haired girl, Yue, was caught by him in princess carry style and he carefully let her down, next he received the rabbit-eared girl, Shia, who jumped down the same way.

The last to jump down was a boy dressed in black, Endou Kousuke.

"Na-Nagumoo! You-! I was blown away by that! Wait, what was that just now!? It suddenly pierced the dungeon's floors…"

Endou looked at the surrounding, started complaining. Then, he saw his best friends and the others together with a group of demonic beasts. After noticing that he was being watched by his stiffened classmates, "Nuoh!," and released a strange shout. To Endou, they voices were half-filled with joy because of their reunion, and anger because he came back.

""Kousuke!""

"Jyuugo! Kentarou! I've come with help!"

Reacting to "I've come with help," Kouki's party and the demon race woman finally returned to their sense. Then, they once again stared at Hajime and the two girls. However, not minding the gazes of those in his surroundings, Hajime quickly ordered Yue and Shia with a slightly irritated expression.

“Yue, sorry but please protect those people gathered there. Shia, please look at the condition of the fallen man in Knight’s armor there.”

“Nn… leave it to me.”

“Roger~!”

Yue calmly walked without caring about the surrounding demonic beasts, while Shia used her marvelous jumping power to jump overhead the group of demonic beasts and landed beside the collapsed Meld.

“Ha-Hajime-kun…”

Kaori once again called Hajime’s name with a shaking voice. Her tone was probably filled with joy due to the reunion, yet there was also sorrow. It was because she thought Hajime had came here to die. Although Kaori didn’t know the details, her expression was telling him to immediately get away from the place.

Shrugging his shoulders, he returned Kaori’s gaze. Hajime briefly said, “It’s okay now, so just wait there.” After saying that, he activated “Light Speed” which greatly improved his perception. Then, he took out three Cross Bits from “Treasure Box” which surrounded Kaori and Shizuku like shields.

The floating cross-like objects that suddenly appeared from empty

space surprised Kaori and Shizuku. With his back before the two, Hajime made a proposal towards the demon race woman whose appearance could be seen as nothing but arrogance. It was his mercy since the demon race woman was still not his enemy.

“The red-haired woman over there. I won’t do anything if you leave immediately. Just disappeared quickly from here if you don’t want to die.”

“…What did you say?”

It was not a remark that could be said by an ordinary human while being surrounded by demonic beasts. It was the reason why the demon race woman inadvertently asked back. As a response, Hajime repeated himself with an amazed expression.

“Prompt decisions are needed in battlefields. That’s why I said, just disappear from here quickly if you don’t want to die. Understand now?”

Knowing she did not hear it wrong, the demon race woman erased her expression and ordered the demonic beasts while pointing at Hajime, “Kill him.”

This time, the too abrupt situation—— especially the dead of her treasured Ahatd due to an unknown attack made the demon race woman lose her calm and make a fatal mistake.

Even if Hajime had his own objection, the woman was too enraged by Hajime who by the course of events treaded on Ahatd, a demonic beast she didn't want to lose since it was given to her by her revered superior. In addition, there was the confusion due to the unbelievable situation where the dungeon's ceiling had been destroyed just because he wanted to go downstairs. In any case, she would have been able to make a more careful judgement if it was the usual her. However, the glove had been thrown out.

"I see… So, I take it that you're an "enemy", right?"

Hajime muttered at the same time the Chimera attacked him. Behind Hajime, "Hajime-kun!" and "Nagumo-kun!" warning voices filled with urgency could be heard. However, Hajime casually clawed the Chimera attacking from his left with his artificial arm and lifted it without any difficulty.

The Chimera was surprised and struggled to escape which made the space blurred intensely. Looking at it, Hajime looked at it with scorn.

"Oi, oi, what is this? This half-assed peculiar magic. Are you a street performer?"

Because there's no meaning if one's presence and figure disappears when spaces blurs when it moves. Hajime inadvertently retorted. Even in the abyss, there were demonic beasts that could conceal their presences and figuring out what each of them has was extremely troublesome. Comparing it to them, Hajime thought it was too childish that the concealment exposed when it moved.

Standing still while he raised a Chimera with huge body weighing several hundreds kilograms as it struggling mid air, Hajime made the demon race woman, Kaori, and the others dumbfounded.

Hajime leered at them and used “Great Arm” to throw the Chimera on the ground as though he had lost his interest in it.

BoOoOoOmM!!

BaAaAaANNNG

With a raw sound ringing out, the Chimera had its head crushed and made a crater on the ground. Next, having drawn out Donner, Hajime turned the railgun towards the space that seemed to be empty at a glance and fired it in succession.

BAAANG BAAAAANNNG!!

Dry, explosive sounds rang out and two flashes cut through the air, mercilessly piercing respective targets. The space blurred for a moment, then a Chimera with a blasted head and a Brutal-look-alike whose heart had been shot through appeared. They stood still for a second, swayed, and crumbled to ground.

Not moving but could not conceal the wind flow, the shaking of the air and ground, their gazes, killing intent, flow of magic, and temperature made them nothing but unmoving targets for Hajime.

Without even looking at the demonic beasts he instantly killed, Hajime took a step forward into the battlefield, no, the execution ground. What started could not even be called deathmatch. It was a one-sided execution by the monster who shouldn't be made into an enemy.

The demon race woman was shocked seeing the demonic beasts were killed casually and easily while the classmates stood still feeling the chill from the weapon that shouldn't exist in this world. Leaving aside those stiffened people, the demonic beasts were attacking Hajime one after another, faithfully executing the demon race woman's order.

A black cat creeped behind him and fired its tentacles, but Hajime didn't turn around and only turned the wrist of his lowered arm where Donner was and fired behind. The bullet exceeding the speed of sound easily gouged through the black cat's forehead.

Without stopping to look at their companion, four-eyed wolves rushed towards him from left and right at the same time. However, Schlag, unknown as to when it was drawn, blew the enemy on his left while Donner blown off the one on the right.

At that moment, the black cats hidden behind the annihilated four-eyed wolves shot their tentacles in cooperation with the Chimeras that were approaching Hajime's back. However, Hajime had jumped several meters above, flipped mid-air, and while hanging upside down, the floating black cats and the two Chimera, who lost sight of their target, became preys for the railgun.

Within the scattered flesh and blood that looked like flower storm, two Brutal-look-alikes came and swung their maces, aiming for the moment Hajime landed. However, such an easily predicted future wouldn't work on a monster such as Hajime, and he jumped further using "Aerodynamic" mid-air. He then fired Donner-Schlag to his left and right in succession while spinning like a top.

The released wind of killing intent not only moved towards the two Brutal-look-alikes that were waiting for him, but it also pierced and burst to pieces the heads of the Chimeras and four-eyed wolves that were approaching from behind. While each of the demonic beasts sprayed and scattered blood, Hajime descend as though to follow the law of inertia and dulled the momentum right before he landed.

Landing soundlessly in the center of the corpses and a ground dyed with blood, Hajime took out ammo from an empty space and use gunspin to reload them.

And at that time, "KuWAaAA!," a strange sound rang out all of a sudden. Hajime turned toward the source and there was the six-legged turtle-like demonic beasts, Absod, whose wide opened mouth was turned towards Hajime. Inside its mouth was a compression of tremendous power shining a pure white light.

It was the previously stored huge magic power from Commander Meld's "Last Loyalty." The "Last Loyalty"'s range was only few meters but its power was more than enough to decimate a person.

The magic power was compressed to the limit and in the next moment it was launched like a laser towards its target, Hajime. The death light approached as it gouged out the ground on its track.

However, Hajime calmly took out a large, coffin-like shield from an empty space, equipped it on his left arm, and activated “Vajra” the same time he held up the shield. Just like a huge tree whose roots were firmly rooted on the ground, there was no impatience in Hajime’s eyes which showed his firm will.

A tremendous roar resounded the moment the laser-like magic power hit, and the trembling air expressed how strong it was. However, Hajime, who received the direct hit, didn’t even move a step away, but rather, he sported a mischievous smile, and began to slant the shield to parry the attack. The destination of where the attack was averted to was…

“Kh!? Damn it!”

It was the demon race woman. Since the time Hajime began to easily kill the demonic beasts, she sensed the crisis and began to chant powerful magic with an exaggerated chant, but Hajime noticed it and redirect Absod’s attack towards the demon race woman to obstruct her.

The unexpected situation made the demon race woman take an evasive action in a panic, but Hajime only adjusted the angle of his shield for the attack to reach her. The torrent of light approached her and destroyed the wall, made the demon race woman frantically ran on the side of the wall. Her expression was one where there was not the slightest hint of composure remained.

However, the attack gradually drew near her back, and when she thought she would be mowed down by the attack she had ordered to be released, the magic power stored by Absod had reached the bottom and the attack ended.

“Tch…”

Without any room to react to Hajime who clicked his tongue, the demon race woman breathed a sigh of relief only to be frozen in the next moment.

BaAaAaANNNG!!

An explosive sound roared along with the feeling of heat passing right beside her right cheek, and something white splattered.

That something was the remains of the white crow which was previously stood on the demon race woman’s shoulder. Although things had not been going the way he expected, Hajime countered by firing Donner aiming at Absod while Schlag was aimed at the white crow.

Even if Absod tried to evade only to endure the bullet so even with its tremendous velocity, it would only leave a small sound, but it could not even sense the bullet which ended up piercing through its opened mouth and its consciousness fell into darkness for eternity.

Even the white crow had its body burst open and had died in an instant, scattering white feathers along with its flesh and blood. Receiving the after effect of the railgun, the demon race woman lost her balance, fell on her butt, and absentmindedly patted her own cheek. What stuck there were the white crow’s flesh and

blood, and at the same time she felt the heat from the severe burn.

If it shifted just by a few centimeters… The demon race woman was trembling when she thought of what might have happened. In other words, Hajime whose matchless strength allowed him to playfully kill the army of demonic beasts as though he was killing bugs before her eyes, and could have also killed her at any time. Even now, her life was in the palm of his hands.

The demon race woman had a strong pride as a warrior, but she could not stop her trembling body before the monster-like existence. What was that? Why did such a thing exist? How can I survive from that monster!? Such thoughts filled the demon race woman's mind, and it continued to circle round and round inside her.

Kouki and the others felt the same as her. They could not immediately see through the white haired, eyepatched boy as Hajime. They could not understand who was the unknown person who easily annihilated the demonic beasts that had put them into such predicament.

"What was that…? Just who in this world is he!?"

Kouki muttered while his unmoving body was laid on the ground. Everyone around him also had the same questions forming in their minds. The one who answered was the person they asked to retreat only to return here by his own will, Endou.

"Haha, I know it is unbelievable… but he is Nagumo."

“”””””””Hah?”””””””””

Endou’s words made Kouki and the others leaked those words at the same time. Seeing Endou, they though, “Is this guy’s head okay?,” and made some gesture with their hands. Thinking, it can’t be helped, huh～, Endou could only shrugged his shoulders because he was only stating the truth.

“Like I said, he is Nagumo, Nagumo Hajime. The Nagumo who fell from the bridge at that day. He survived in the depth of the dungeon and climbed up with his own power. When coming here, he treated the demonic beasts as if they are just small fries. It’s seriously unbelievable!, I thought so, too… but it is the truth.”

“Nagumo, eh? You mean Nagumo is alive!?”

Kouki said with a surprised voice. Thus, the others also simultaneously tried to look at the boy with monstrous strength who was advancing the annihilation progress… but as expected they tried to deny it while thinking, “Just how is he Nagumo?” Endou understood their feelings and with a gesture he said, “Well, it’s true. Although he has completely changed, I’ve seen his status plate,” Endou told them again that the boy was Nagumo Hajime while sporting a dry smile.

Everyone felt it was unbelievable as they vacantly looked at Hajime’s peerlessness, and a person who was awfully flustered said,

“L-Lies. Nagumo is dead. Wasn’t that the case? Everyone also saw it. There’s no way he is alive! We have already agreed on that!”

“Uwah, what’s with you! I have seen his status plate so there’s no mistake it is him.”

“Lies! There’s must be some trick! He must be in disguise and trying to trick us!”

“No, just what are you saying? There’s no reason for him to do that.”

The one who was saying unreasonable things and grabbed Endou’s collar was Hiyama. He was denying Hajime’s survival with an abnormally paled complexion. Kondou and the others around him were somewhat taken aback by Hiyama’s appearance.

The agitated Hiyama was doused by cold water, literally. A large amount of water suddenly appeared above Hiyama and poured down on him like a small waterfall. Hiyama somewhat drowned because it matched the timing when he inhaled. After being doused with water, he had a coughing fit. What on earth!? Hiyama was confused only to be told by a cold voice far colder than the cold water.

“… Be quiet. It’s irritating.”

Although Hiyama seemed to getting more agitated and tried to

object, he instinctively swallowed his words when he turned his gaze towards the source of the voice. After all, the source of the voice, Yue, was looking at Hiyama with a very cold gaze as though she was looking at an insect. At the same time, not only a few would forget their situation after they were captivated by the ideal girl whose beauty was just like the highest grade bisque doll.

Same could be said for Kouki's party. Their gazes were naturally attracted to the beautiful looking girl whether they were female or male. Even Suzu was obviously captivated and said, "Whooaa~," with a strange voice. It wasn't simply because of her beauty, she was also cladded in a bewitching atmosphere contrary to her young appearance which made Kouki's party captivated.

And at that time, maybe because of the demon race woman's instruction, several demonic beasts came to attack Kouki's party. She probably thought of turning them into hostages just like how she had used Meld. It was a normal measure since she couldn't even imagine of capturing Hajime with a fair challenge.

Suzu immediately thought of creating shields. Having activated magic one after another, her exhausted body was screaming. She bit her lips to prevent herself from blacking out… but Yue gently stopped Suzu with her hand. Having Yue quietly patting her head, "Ehh?," Suzu inadvertently said with a relaxed voice and stopped her chant.

"… Don't worry."

Yue muttered, and Suzu said, "Ah, it's already safe now," without any basis for it nor any power left her body. Even she herself didn't know why she could simply accepted Yue's words, but she felt she

was being defended by a reliable big sister.

Yue looked away from Suzu and glared at the demonic beasts that readied their fangs, claws, tentacles, and maces. Then, with one sentence she pulled her magic's trigger.

“”Blue Dragon.””

In the next moment, a bluish-white sphere with one meter in diameter appeared above Yue and the others. Those who used flame attribute magic knew it was one of the highest level magic, a blue flame magic capable of decimating anything it approached, “Blue Imperial.” It was abnormal to be able to activate it without any chant and in no time. Especially the rear group; they knew what happened and could only looked up at the blue blaze in blank surprise.

However, this was just the start of what would make them truly surprised. The blue flame burning radiantly suddenly changed its shape to one of a snake, attacked the incoming maces swinging Brutal-look-alikes and the others by swallowing them. They were instantly killed, and not even an ash remained.

Before long, the shape of the blue flame changed and swam in the air. It was a blazing blue dragon, with length of around 30 meters. With Yue in the center, the blue dragon protected Kouki and the others by coiling around them. Then, it raised its head, and opened its jaws towards the demonic beasts which were standing still because they could not approach the the blue hellfire that would perish everything.

RoOoOAAAAR!!!

It roared. And immediately, the bodies of the demonic beasts flew. As though they were attracted by gravity, they jumped into the blue dragon's mouth one after another. Although the others understood it was not suicide since the demonic beasts desperately tried to escape in mid-air in panic due to the abrupt situation. Seeing the demonic beast throwing their bodies in queue towards the annihilation that didn't even leave an ash, made them think it as nothing but a bad joke.

"What is this magic…"

Someone muttered. The unknown magic had one-sidedly burnt the demonic beasts to annihilation by pulling them, which made Kouki's party unable to close their wide opened mouths. But it couldn't be helped. After all, this magic was the same as "Thunder Dragon," an original magic of Yue's, formed by combining the highest fire magic element, "Blue Imperial," and one of the Age of Gods' magic, gravity magic.

Incidentally, the reason she used "Blue Dragon" and not "Thunder Dragon" was simply because Yue was training herself. Thunder Dragon was a combination between gravity magic and high-ranked wind attribute, thunder, so "Blue Dragon" had higher difficulty and power. Because she was just recently capable of combining highest level magic, she wanted to make its debut.

Naturally, Kouki's party who didn't know of the circumstances shifted their gazes from the "Blue Dragon" to Yue, about to ask for an explanation. However, calmly straightening its back, the Blue Dragon stopped and its flame shone brighter. Together with Yue's

sublime figure, it made Kouki's party hold their breath, and they were unable to say the words to ask for an explanation. Several people quickly had their hearts stolen by Yue… especially Suzu; she was letting out an exclamation of joy like a small old man.

On the other side, when the demon race woman saw the bizarre "Blue Dragon" from the distance, she cursed in her mind, "There's only monsters here, huh!" Frustrated due to the demonic beasts being exterminated one after another, she changed her aim to the RabbitMan girl beside the mortally wounded Meld, and the two girls close to each other who were separated from the others.

However, the demon race woman was further exposed to the arbitrary.

The Brutal-look-alike which came to attack Shia had its head blown away like a pinball with a swing from Doryukken. She then rotated her body using the momentum from her first attack towards the four-eyed wolf coming advancing from behind her and it died easily with its head crushed by an attack carrying enough centrifugal force.

Once again, Chimeras and black cats were about to attack Kaori and Shizuku. Shizuku gritted her teeth, and readied her broken sword towards the incoming; the scattered demonic beasts filled with killing intent. However, as if to stop them, the cross bits floating in her surrounding came in between Shizuku and the Chimeras.

Shizuku was somewhat shaken by the mysterious crosses were moving as though to protect her. Suddenly, the longer point of the crosses turned towards the Chimera and a roaring sounds rang out.

“Seriously, what are those!?” Shizuku was shouting inside her mind, when something spinningly flew almost grazing her cheek and fell to the ground with a metallic sound. The same roaring sound rang out beside Kaori, and the same sound of metal resounded, too, as expected.

Although confused, Kaori and Shizuku returned their attentions towards the incoming demonic beasts, and there were only the figures of demonic beasts with heads blown to pieces… They were speechless and turned their gazes towards the source of the metallic sounds and confirmed its identity.

“Isn’t that… cartridge?”

“Cartridge… a gun’s?”

Kaori and Shizuku faced each other as they said the unfamiliar term out loud. They were convinced once they saw Hajime’s figure rampaging with guns in both hand. The crosses floating to defend them were similar to an all-range weapon from somewhere.

“A-Amazing… Hajime-kun can use Funnel.”

“Just, since when did he become a NewType…”

Kaori and Shizuku regained a lot of their composure after the surrounding demonic beasts were instantly exterminated. They let out unbecoming retorts which were actually transmitted to Hajime

through the Cross Bits. And on the contrary, Hajime wanted to retort back in regards to how the two knew such references. However, Hajime did not worry about it thanks to the skill he honed by being in the company of Yue and the girls, “Let it be”.

“Seriously… what’s with this.”

The demon race woman muttered powerlessly. No matter what she tried, everything was held down and crushed by sheer power. Such irrational things allowed her mind to be invaded by feeling of throwing in the towel. There were hardly any demonic beasts remaining, and it was obvious to anyone who was the victor and loser.

My last hope! The demon race woman fired magic towards Hajime for the sake of escaping and ran towards one of the four exits with all of her might. The magic fired towards Hajime was “Final Prison.” It exploded right beside Hajime, and the petrifying smoke wrapped around him. Kouki’s party held their breaths while Kaori and Shizuku screamed Hajime’s name.

Leering at the shaken Kouki’s party, the demon race woman finally reached one of the exits.

However…

“Haha… I’ve been checkmated, huh.”

“It is certainly as you say.”

Before the demon race woman was the floating cross with its dark muzzle pointed at her from inside the passage. With a dry laughter, only now did she realize she had been checkmated long since before she attacked Hajime, and the demon race woman inadvertently leaked a dry laughter. The hateful calm voice came from behind.

This time, the demon race woman looked back in resignation and she saw Hajime walking closer from inside the petrifying smoke as if nothing happened. Next, he scattered the petrifying smoke to the other passage by sweeping it away using the red wave of “Magic Emission.”

“… You monster. To take a high-ranked magic as something insignificant… You, are you really human?”

“Actually, even I’ve doubting that. But, it isn’t so bad to become a monster, you know?”

Hajime and the demon race woman said in a joking manner with only a slight distance between them. When the demon race woman took a look at the room, the demonic beasts had truly been annihilated before she was aware of it. Once again she cursed in a small voice, “You monster.”

Ignoring her, Hajime aimed Donner’s muzzle towards the woman. The weapon of death pointed right before her eyes made the demon race woman realize it was time for her to die, and she

looked back.

“Well then, “Do you have anything left to say?” Is what is usually said in these kinds of situation… Unfortunately, I don’t have any interest in hearing your last will. More importantly, about why a person of the demon race had come here… and where you obtained those demonic beasts… Shall I have you spit it out?”

“Do you think I will speak? It might become an advantage for human race, right? As if I am that stupid.”

The demon race woman snorted scornfully, which made Hajime look at her with cold gaze. Thus, without hesitation, he fired Donner to both of the demon race woman’s legs.

“AgaaAH!!”

The demon race woman screamed and collapsed. The scream resounded inside the silent room where the demonic beasts had ceased to breathe. Hajime knew the classmates behind him were gulping because of his merciless action. However, not worrying about such things, Hajime asked again with Donner aimed at the woman.

“Whether it’s human race or demon race, I don’t care about your world’s circumstance. I am asking you not as someone from human race. I am only asking because I want to know it. So, answer it now.”

“…”

The demon race woman was glaring at Hajime while gritting her teeth from the pain. Seeing her eyes, Hajime realized she was not likely to speak, so he began to speak instead.

“Well, I have roughly guessed it. You came here to conquer the “True Great Dungeon,” right?”

The demon race woman’s brows twitched from Hajime’s words. Hajime continued speaking while carefully observing the woman’s reaction.

“Those demonic beasts were the product of an Age of Gods magic… looks like I hit the bull’s eye. I see, so the change in demon race side was because they conquered a Great Dungeon and obtained the Age of Gods magic which could enslave demonic beasts, huh… Resultantly, the human race side moved to conquer the Great Dungeon by investigating and then inviting the heroes…”

“How… it can’t be…”

Hajime had stated his theories which was right on the mark, and it rattled the demon race woman. With the mortified expression, she questioned how he knew when a possibility came to mind. Seeing her expression, Hajime noticed the demon race woman had guessed Hajime was also another dungeon conqueror. With his glance, he responded, “Correct.”

“I see, if you are the same as that person… then I can understand your monster-like power… Ah, isn’t that enough? Just kill me. After all, I have no intention of being a captive…”

“As that person… right. You must be referring to the conqueror whom you received the demonic beasts from, huh…”

The expression of the demon race woman’s face told him she would rather commit suicide rather than to be taken as a captive. Thus, she wanted to at least die in battle. The information about another dungeon conqueror was enough for Hajime, so with thoughts of ending it, killing intent appeared in his eyes.

As revenge for dying in the middle of her path, and unwillingness to admit defeat, the demon race woman muttered towards Hajime.

“Someday, my lover will kill you.”

Her words made Hajime’s lips curved and floated a fearless smile.

“I will kill my enemy, even if it is God. And if that person is someone who dances inside the palm of God’s, then he wouldn’t be able to reach me.”

There’s nothing left to talk about, so the two closed their mouths. Hajime turned Donner’s muzzle towards the demon race woman’s head.

However, the moment he was about to pull the trigger, a loud voice stopped him.

“Wait! Just wait, Nagumo! She can no longer fight! So, it’s not necessary to kill her!”

“…”

With his finger still on Donner’s trigger, “What is this guy saying?,” Hajime looked over his shoulder with a dubious expression. Kouki managed to unsteadily stand up after he had slightly recovered and further raised his voice.

“Capture, right, just make her a captive. It’s absolutely unforgivable to kill someone who cannot resist. I am the hero. And Nagumo is my comrade, so please back away in consideration of me.”

Excuses that rendered too much retort was something Hajime thought there was no value in hearing it and swiftly discarded them. Silently,… he pulled the trigger.

BaAaAaANNNG!

The dry explosive sound echoed inside the room. Killing intent was aimed and a shot was fired through the demon race woman’s

forehead where she instantly died.

Silence engulfed their surrounding. The classmates finally understood and could only hold their bated breaths, puzzled to the spectacle where one of their classmate killed a person without hesitation. Amongst all of them, Kaori was most shocked by it.

It was not about him killing a person. After all, Kaori herself had been prepared for it. It was a natural thing since they had entered the fight in this world. After all, fighting the demonic beast inside the dungeon was only combat exercise.

That's why, a day where killing one another would surely come, for she must kill hostile people, and she was prepared to do it. She was a healer who stand by the rear, but thinking of Shizuku, Kouki, and the others who were in the front lines — the time when her the hands of her friends will be dirtied by blood, even if it was just a little, made her heart resolved to not averting from such situations even just for a moment.

What shocked Kaori was because she could not sense any aversion, disgust, and hesitation towards murder from Hajime. He killed a person as though it was natural as breathing. The Hajime Kaori knew was someone who even though he couldn't go against the others, he was a gentle and strong person capable of being able to jump into a whirlpool for the sake of others.

That form of being "strong" was not a power that came from violence. It was a strength due to "thinking about others" no matter what time or situation he was in. That's why, Hajime who could kill an enemy who had lost her spirit and would not resist with neither hesitation nor had any deep emotion, had become

someone completely different from Hajime she knew, and it shocked her.

Shizuku was her best friend, so she understood Kaori had received a powerful shock. However, she was able to guess what shocked Kaori from the scattered talk they usually had about Hajime when they were in Japan.

Shizuku looked at Hajime with a cool expression and she thought he had certainly changed, but she knew it was wrong for her, who knew nothing, to complain about it. That's why, as the result, she could do nothing but to stop being nestled close to Kaori.

However, naturally, the lump of justice called hero wouldn't be able to stay silent about it. Kouki's voice rang out as if to subdue the space filled with silence.

"Why, why did you kill her. Was there any necessary to kill her…"

Hajime was walking towards Shia's side and caught Kouki staring at him with a penetrating glare at the edge of his view. He hesitated for a moment thinking how he should answer, but in the next moment, to begin with, there's no need to answer!, he thought and decided to ignore Kouki.

However, whether the other party would allow Hajime's attitude was another problem…

Arifureta: Volume 8 Chapter 9

Chapter 79 of the Web Novel.

The This and That After the Reunion

While the sound of Kouki's desperate voice subduing the silence, the person whom the words were directed to pretended as though he didn't hear anything and walked towards Shia's side, beside the collapsed Meld.

Thinking there was no longer a need to protect Kouki's party, Yue also walked towards Hajime and Shia. "Ahh, One-sama!," Suzu's shout, whose heart was just like a small old man, came from behind her.

"Shia, how's Meld's condition?"

"It was almost too late. He would not survive if we were even a little slower… I used "Holy Water" as instructed, but… was it really okay to do that?"

"Ah, I was indebted to this person. Besides, the hole Meld left would be too big in a lot of ways. It'll be especially problematic if someone weird took over the training of the Hero's party. Well, seeing their current state, it looks like Meld was unable to finish their training properly… but it isn't a mistake that he is a man of character. He is a person who will cause regret in various meanings if he died."

Kouki was currently glaring at Hajime. Supported by Ryuutarou, he walked towards Hajime accompanied by the other classmates. Shia was asking him for the reason of using Holy Water on Meld. Incidentally, what he meant by “someone weird” was the person from Church of the Saints such as Ishtal.

“… Hajime.”

“Yue. Thank you for listening to my request.”

“Nh.”

Yue had arrived at the time he was still speaking to Shia. While gently patting Yue’s cheek who was looking up at him as she called his name, Hajime conveyed his gratitude. Yue’s gaze expressed, “Don’t mind,” while delightedly narrowing her eyes. Naturally, Hajime’s gaze softened and the two were watching each other.

“… You two, please read the mood… Come on, return to your senses! Everyone are almost gathered here!”

Hajime and Yue began to create their own world which could already be called a disease for them. Thus, Shia clapped her hands and retorted to make them return to their senses.

Apparently, the glares coming from Kouki with different meaning

had increased and Hajime noticed it. Especially a glare coming from different direction than Kouki and the others. It made him feel a chill running down on his spine.

“Oi, Nagumo. Why did you kill—…”

“Hajime-kun… even though there’s much I want to ask, how’s Meld-san’s condition? From what I see, the injuries had been closed and his breathing is also steady. But, he should’ve been mortally wounded…”

Kouki’s words to press a question onto Hajime was interrupted by Kaori, who came and knelt by Meld’s side with a serious expression and asked Hajime the details of Meld’s condition.

For a moment, Hajime felt the chill in his guts from Kaori’s gaze, but thinking it was just his imagination, he decided to answer Kaori’s question.

“Yeah, that’s because… I used a rather special medicine. The liquid type that will instantly heal a person completely even if the person was dying.”

“S-Such a medicine, how come I’ve never heard of it?”

“That is because it was once only a legend… and no one would be able to obtain it, normally. That’s why, Yaegashi, you need to be healed by magic. And here is the potion to recover magic power.”

“Eh, yes… Thank you.”

Being called by Hajime, Shizuku received the potion and slightly stammered while she said her gratitude due to the gap between the current Hajime and the Hajime in her memory. Hajime didn’t especially mind Shizuku’s reaction and he gave another magic power recovery potion to Kaori. Kaori caught the potion bottle and drunk the content after she said her gratitude to Hajime. With the Lipovitan-like taste spreading inside her mouth, her energy gradually recovered. The classmates should be immediately healed as long as Kaori recovers.

For now, Kaori and the others breathed sighs of relief because they understood there was nothing to worry about in regards to Meld. Then, Kouki once again opened his mouth.

“Oi, Nagumo, I am grateful about Meld-san’s matter, but why did y —…”

“Hajime-kun. Thank you for saving Meld-san. Also, thank you… for saving us.”

Thus, he was once again interrupted by Kaori. Kouki now wore a truly subtle expression. However, Kaori completely not noticing Kouki’s expression since she was looking straight at Hajime. Even though she received a severe shock from Hajime’s changes, there were things she wanted to say. She walked up until she was right before Hajime to say her gratitude about Meld’s matter and how he saved them.

Afterwards, while grasping her skirt with both hands, guh, the things she wanted to say were on the tip of her tongue, but she couldn't say anything and her tears began to fall. Although she was sobbing, she didn't look away from Hajime as though to confirm the him before her was not an illusion. Hajime silently returned Kaori's gaze.

"Hajime-gun… dank God, gusuh, dat you'r alive. Dat time, I am sorry… hic… dat I couldn't protect you… waaa."

Amongst the classmates, the girls held warm gazes because they could guess Kaori's feelings. Some of the boys also had warm gazes, but Kondou and some others had bitter expressions, while Kouki and Ryuutarou were dumbfounded since they could not understand Kaori. The most dense protagonist on earth, Kouki, and the muscle for a brain, Ryuutarou, made it hard for Shizuku and it could be seen in her eyes.

With troubled expression, Shia said, "Uh, by any chance, is she a new rival?," while Yue was looking at Kaori with the usual silent and expressionlessness.

The Kaori before him was crying which messed her face, and Hajime wore an indescribable expression when he realized Kaori had been worrying about him since the day he fell just as Endou had said.

The truth was, he had told Yue once about his circumstance along with the story about Kaori, but that was when they were still in the abyss, and he had completely forgotten about Kaori until he met

Aiko and the others in Ul. That's why, he was gradually feeling guilty because she thought of him this strongly.

After sporting a troubled and at lost expression, Hajime answered Kaori's words with a bitter smile.

"…What to say, looks like I've made you worried. I am sorry for not immediately telling you about it. Well, just as you see, I am alive… so there's no need to apologize… Also, umm, please don't cry."

Hajime said while looking at Kaori with the same gentle gaze when he was worrying about Kaori and said, "Please protect me." Upon seeing his gaze, Kaori felt her chest being filled with the memory of the night when they exchanged the promise. Inadvertently, Waahh, she cried and jumped into Hajime's chest.

At a loss of what to do about Kaori who was crying while clinging on his chest, Hajime held up both of his hands. If it was another classmate, he would have mercilessly threw the person away since he would feel irritated and use yakuza kick to make the person unconscious. However, the pure and never changing goodwill which was the same even before he fell into the abyss made him incapable of treating her coldly.

But with Yue by his side, he couldn't embrace another woman and could only hold up his hands as though someone had pointed gun's muzzle at him, becoming a half assed respond since he just let Kaori cry. It was truly not Hajime-like.

“My best friend is crying! So, hug her!,” was what Shizuku’s gaze who was beside him was saying, but it was hard to move because Yue was also watching him in silence. Being helpless, he lightly pat Kaori’s head to stop her after a while. Really, Hajime had became a good for nothing.

“…Fuu, Kaori is really gentle. She even cry in joy from her classmate’s survival… However, Nagumo killed a non-resisting person. We need to talk. That’s why, that’s enough and you should get away from Nagumo.”

“You, read the mood!,” was what some of the classmates criticized Kouki with their gazes. Even in such time, this boy was still unable to be considerate to Kaori’s feeling. While glaring at Hajime mixed with condemn, he tried to pull Kaori away from Hajime. Maybe it was simply because he didn’t want others to touch Kaori or because the caution he held from being beside a murderer… or maybe both.

“Wait, Kouki! Isn’t Nagumo-kun the one who saved us? How can you said such things?”

“But, Shizuku. That woman already lost her spirit to fight. There’s no need to kill her. So what Nagumo did is something I can’t allow.”

“See here, Kouki, can you cut it out already? To begin with…”

Kouki’s objection was rebutted by Shizuku. The other classmates were flustered since they didn’t know what to do, but Hiyama’s gang who never liked Hajime began to support Kouki.

Gradually, it became a discussion about Hajime's action. Kaori had already separated from Hajime's chest and wiped her tears, but there was still the shock she received from a while ago, so she fell silent with a difficult expression while she was thinking of something.

Suddenly, a voice came to douse them with cold water.

"…What foolish people. Hajime, can we leave now?"

"Ah~, yup, let's go."

The one calling Kouki and the others "foolish" with tone so cold as if it was in absolute zero was Yue. Although the voice was spoken in small mutter, it clearly resounded even inside the commotion of Kouki and the others. For a moment, silence wrapped their location, then Kouki and the others moved their gazes towards Yue.

To begin with, the reason Hajime came here after hearing Endou's story was his obligation to Kaori, and it had been accomplished. Thus, he went out of the room following Yue who pulled his hand. Shia followed after them without minding the others.

As such, the action of Hajime's party made Kouki and the others stop.

“Please stop. Our talk here isn’t over yet. I won’t take Nagumo as my comrade if he doesn’t tell me his real intention. Besides, just who do you think you are? Although I am grateful for your help, to call us foolish at our first meeting… isn’t that rude? Just what is foolish about us?”

“…”

Kouki once again talk about something out of topic. Although what he said was correct in such situations, comparing their circumstances made Yue wanted to say, “Try to think while putting your hand on your chest.” To even go this far, it wouldn’t be strange to say Kouki was cursed by something.

Maybe because Yue had forsaken Kouki already; she didn’t look at him, expressing there’s no value in looking at him. Kouki was slightly irritated and frowned being of Yue’s attitude, but he immediately floated a gentle smile again, thinking she was just an ordinary girl, and he tried to talk to Yue.

Because this wouldn’t end with the way it was going and he felt Yue’s discomfort, Hajime decided to answer a little and sighed with an expression as though saying it was a hassle.

“Amanogawa. I have neither care nor obligation to answer everything to you whose existence is a joke in more ways than one. But, I’ll point it out to you a little because you are being persistent about it.”

“Point it out, you say? Are you saying I am wrong? I, I only say

something obvious as a person.”

Because, It’s troublesome, truly!, was what Hajime expression turned to. Kouki irritatedly objected Hajime’s words which was then ignored, and Hajime continued his words.

“You can’t fool me.”

“What’s with that…”

“You, you are not angry because I killed that woman. You are only feeling unpleasant to see a person’s death. However, you knew you are mistaken to blame me to kill the woman who murdered the Knights and tried to kill you. That’s why you’re using “killing a non-resisting person” as your main point, right? Being made to see something you didn’t want to see and for someone to easily do things you couldn’t… those are the cause of your anger. However, you tried to cover it under the name of justice. What worse is you yourself aren’t conscious of it. You never change, huh. You interpret things at your own convenience as natural as breathing.”

“Y-You are wrong! Don’t say something for your own convenience! It is the true you killed a non-resisting person!”

“I killed my enemy, what’s wrong with that?”

“Wh-!? What are you saying? It’s murder! Of course it is wrong!”

“Haa, I don’t want to discuss with you, so can we end it now? ———— I, I won’t give any mercy to my enemy. If someone opposed me, as long as I don’t have any other need for it, I will absolutely kill that person. I don’t care whether they are good or evil, resisting or not. Hatefully, I knew I’d be dead if I show even a moment of weakness. This is my sense of value cultivated inside the abyss, and I won’t force it to other. But, if someone doesn’t like it and tried to block me…”

Hajime instantly closed the distance and pressed the muzzle against Kouki’s forehead. At the same time, Hajime’s “Pressure” activated and the dense killing intent fell into the surrounding like a large, powerful waterfall. Kouki’s party held their breaths. Even Kouki, who was able to chase after Shizuku whose movement was the fastest among his comrades, could not even perceive Hajime’s earlier movement and he trembled in fear.

“I will kill them, even if that person is a former classmate of mine.”

“Y-You…”

“Don’t misunderstand, okay? I never thought of returning to you. Also, I am not your comrade. I only came here to pay my obligation to Shirasaki. It’s a goodbye after we get out of here. I have my own path to take.”

After saying so, he glared at Kouki who couldn’t say anything and was holding his breath. Hajime returned Donner to its holster, and with “Pressure” deactivation, the classmates exhaled greatly while looking at Hajime with complexed gazes. However, Kouki still

could not accept it and tried to argue some more. But it was prevented by Yue's harsh words while she wore a disgusted expression.

"…The one who fought was Hajime. The loser who ran away after being defeated in fear has no qualification to criticize him."

"Wh—, you say I ran away…"

Actually it was not a coincidence Hajime's party could pinpointed their location. The truth was, Hajime guessed the explosive torrent of magic power he felt to be coming from Kouki's party when he was still in upper floor. Then, he used full advantage of his perception type skills to search for people presences downstairs and used transmutation along with pile bunker to pierce through the floors.

The torrent of magic power he felt at that time was Kouki's "Supreme Break." Feeling the huge power, Hajime's party understood that Kouki would be able to defeat the demon race woman in that condition. That's why they could see through that Kouki hesitated to kill and invited their predicament after coming to their location. It was why Yue said, "he ran away after being defeated in fear."

Kouki tried to refute Yue, but a deep voice interrupted him.

"Stop it, Kouki."

“Meld-san!”

Meld’s consciousness had returned a while ago and he heard the conversation between Kouki and the others. Still somewhat in a daze, he stood up and shook his head to clear his mind. Next, he saw his abdomen which surely had been injured, and so he tilt his head in confusion.

Kaori explained to Meld in details about what had happened. Knowing he was miraculously helped with a valuable medicine and hearing the owner was Hajime, Meld was happy from the depth of his heart that Hajime was alive. Moreover, he thanked Hajime for saving him. He grandly prostrated for being unable to save him at that time which made Hajime felt uncomfortable to receive his apology.

Rather than not minding it, Hajime had completely forgotten when Meld said, “I will absolutely save you,” … but he read the mood when Meld was before him, apologizing while bowing deeply.

When his conversation with Hajime ended, Meld turned towards Kouki and apologized just like what he did to Hajime.

“M-Meld-san? Why, why are you apologizing?”

“Of course. I am your trainer… but, I forgot to teach you an important thing during a fight. It’s the resolution to kill a person. When the time comes, I’ve thought of making you experience killing people by setting them up as thieves while making it look like a coincidence… After all, that experience is something

necessary if you participate in war against the demon race… However, I've spent a lot of time conversing with you which made me think if it was really okay to let you experience that… Thus, I've hesitated. If I am thinking of my position as the commander of the Knights, I would have taught you even earlier, but… a little longer, just a little longer, until we cleared this. Things dragged on in this manner and reached this situation… I am just being half-assed. It's my mistake as your trainer. That's why, to make you face death… I apologize."

Saying so, Meld once again bowed which made the classmates try and comfort him in hurry. Apparently, Meld had been considerably worried about Kouki's party. He was likely being pulled apart by his mission as the commander and him as a person.

Meld is a citizen of the Kingdom and a believer of Church of the Saints. Therefore, it wasn't weird that he felt it was natural and an honor for Kouki and the others, the "God's Apostles," to fight the demon race. However, he doubted as he fought along with Kouki's party which meant he was a good or maybe a gentle person, and at the level of a man of character just as Hajime said.

Hearing what was in Meld's mind, Kouki fell silent. After knowing that he must kill people in due time, he recalled his fear when he was about to kill the demon race woman. At the same time, he received shock from Meld's words saying they would kill people masked as thieves for the sake of training. If it's thieves, then we have power to overwhelm them. But to purposely killed them… he thought.

On the other side, Kaori was also silent. But it was not because she heard Meld's words. For a long time, she had been thinking about Hajime's words.

The sense of value cultivated inside the abyss where enemy would be killed without hesitation even if it was his classmate… were impossible words coming from Hajime of the past. However, he proved he was serious with the previous killing intent. The Hajime who was gentle and acted by putting the sake of others before him had unhesitatingly turned his killing intent towards them. Kaori was perplexed and shaken by the differences between Hajime she knew and Hajime before her. Thinking of the Hajime who was worried about her from a little ago was an illusion, Kaori was uneasy.

While she was thinking, Kaori suddenly felt someone's gaze. Before Kaori was the blond-haired, red-eyed beautiful girl. A beautiful girl that made even Kaori instinctively charmed. She was quietly observing Kaori with eyes where no feeling could be felt.

Kaori recalled the girl had been fairly intimate with Hajime which made Kaori interested and turned to look at Yue. For a while, the two watched each other.

"…Fu."

"Kh…"

However, Yue was the first to avert her gaze while sneering.

Kaori inadvertently held her breath. It was because she noticed the meaning behind her sneer. It was, "If you are shaken by this, just

forget about Hajime," something like that.

Yue had of course guessed how Kaori feels about Hajime from her attitude. Thus, hearing she believed of Hajime's survival even though he fell into the abyss, a strong rival in love might show up, I must stand tall!, was what she thought.

However, when she saw Kaori comparing the past and current Hajime, and it resulted in her being shaken and perplexed while being taken aback by the differences. Although that reaction was as natural as possible for a person… it made Yue see her as insignificant.

You can't even become an enemy. From now on, Hajime is only mine. Hajime's "special" person is me! The implied declaration made Kaori's face red; red from shame and anger. However, Kaori could not refute since she had lost sight of the human called Hajime. The first encounter between Yue and Kaori resulted in Yue as the victor.

Leering at Kouki and the others whose mood became subtle, Hajime took Yue and Shia along, collected the pile bunker's stake, and tried to go through the opened hole. Noticing what he was doing, Kouki and the others began to follow Hajime's party. Endou had proposed for everyone to take advantage of Hajime's party until they reached the surface, and Meld was being carried by Hajime after they pleaded him.

On the way to the surface, the demonic beasts that tried to obstruct them were instantly killed by Hajime which made them once again amazed by his strength. The classmates wore various expressions thinking whether he was the same person who was once called

“incompetent.”

Hiyama was glaring at Hajime with paled complexion, Kondou’s gang were sending him begrudging gazes, and Nagayama’s party were looking at him admiringly as they wore complex expressions due to Hajime clearly saying he was not their comrade.

Even though Kondou’s gang had closely seen Hajime’s prowess and shrunk before it, they still thought Hajime was the same as the previous him. On the other side, Nagayama’s party knew what kind of treatment Hajime received from Hiyama and his gang and pretend to not see it, so now they felt guilty about it. They thought it could not be helped that Hajime didn’t think of them as his comrades…

Receiving various gazes from Kouki and the others behind him, Hajime just ignored them and advanced on his own road.

On the way, Suzu’s inner oldman caused commotion as she tried to talk to Yue about various things. She also barraged Hajime with questions about what happened, then she turned her aim towards Shia’s huge breasts and rabbit-ears. When she realized the two just ignored her, she was then physically stopped by Shizuku. Kondou’s gang tried to talk to Yue and Shia fully loaded with desire, but were completely ignored, even so they kept being persistent. They tried to touch Shia’s rabbit-ears without permission which awarded them with Hajime’s rubber bullets. They vomited after receiving yakuza kicks, and fear was driven into them when they received a slight killing intent leaking from Hajime ———— various things happened, and finally the group reached the surface.

Kaori was still looking down, worrying. Shizuku was also worriedly

watching Kaori and drew closer to her. However, a situation where an impact blew away all of Kaori's worries had happened. It was a situation she couldn't overlook as a woman whose heart was set on Hajime.

It happened when they arrived at the entrance of «Orcus Great Dungeon».

"Ah! Papaa~!"

"Uh! Myuu, huh."

It was the appearance of a little girl calling Hajime papa.

Arifureta: Volume 8 Chapter 10

Chapter 80 of the Web Novel.

Declaration of War

“Papaa~!! Welcome back~!!”

A cheerful little girl’s voice rang out inside the plaza of «Orcus Great Dungeon»’s entrance gate.

Adventurers and mercenaries, who were going to dive into the dungeon, were noisily negotiating with the merchants who were also advertising themselves in various crowded stalls. However, Myuu’s raised voice, which rivaled their own, made the experts of battle look at her and smile as their gazes softened.

Tap, tap, tap, tap, tap—! Myuu ran straight towards Hajime while making such lovely footsteps, and then jumped into Hajime. Hajime failed to receive her since he hadn’t even dreamed she would do that.

In a normal situation, the little girl’s head would have thrust into his stomach like a rocket and made him writhe in pain. But fortunately, Hajime’s body was not that weak. Moreover, he completely warded off the impact so he would not injure Myuu, and firmly caught her.

“Myuu, you came to welcome us? Where’s Tio?”

“Un. Tio-oneechan thought it was about time for Papa to come back. That’s why we came here. Tio-oneechan is…”

“This one is here.”

Separating the crowd, a beautiful, black-haired, golden-eyed, young woman appeared. Needless to say, it was Tio. Since she was within the crowd where it wasn’t odd for one to get lost made, Hajime began to complain about her being separated from Myuu.

“Oi oi, Tio. Don’t separate from Myuu in such a place.”

“This one kept her along her sight. It just that there were some rude fellows. And this one doth not want to let Myuu see a ghastly spectacle.”

“I see. Then it couldn’t be helped… So, where are the suicide candidates?”

“Well, Master. This one has completely settled it down.”

“… Tch, well whatever.”

“… Doth Master truly believe thee will return her again?”

Apparently, there were some idiots who tried to kidnap Myuu. Because Myuu was a child from the Sea-dweller tribe, she put on a hood so she wouldn’t stand out in such a public location. As such, not knowing she was a child from Sea-dweller tribe protected by the Kingdom, there were people thinking of insolence. One of the reasons might be because under the hood, she had the face of a young child with lovely features. It was unknown whether their objective was ransom or not though.

Hajime asked for the criminals’ whereabout with a dark smile and the obviousness that he’d kill them, made Tio admonish him in half-amazement. In the beginning, Hajime disliked being called Papa from the bottom of his heart, but now he had become her Papa. When we arrive at Elisen, can Master separate from her… Hajime was more worrisome than Myuu.

Hearing the conversation between Hajime and Tio, Kouki’s party stood in blank surprise. Though they understood Hajime had become strong in the past four months because he experienced various things they couldn’t even imagine, “How can he be a father!” Everyone was dumbfounded by this thought. The male students thought, “Just what kind of experiences has he piled up!?” and they moved their gazes to Yue and Shia, and next they looked at the black-haired, big-breasted, beautiful woman who suddenly appeared, and they clearly thought of something rude. This surprise might even be greater than the time Hajime displayed his peerlessness inside the dungeon.

If they calmly thought about it, it’s unbelievable for him to make a child after being missing for just four months, but the various impacts in succession, along with them just returning from life and

death battle made them lost their composure and splendidly make such a misunderstanding.

Following that, one person unsteadily moved within Kouki's party. With a smile plastered on her face which didn't reach the eyes… it was Kaori. Kaori unsteadily approached him and suddenly, glare, her eyes opened wide then she caught Hajime.

"Hajime-kun! What does this mean!? Is she really Hajime-kun's daughter!? Who's the mother!? Yue-san!? Shia-san!? Or, is it that black-haired person!? Don't tell me, there are others!? Just how many did you make pregnant!? Answer me! Hajime-kun!"

Gripping Hajime's collar, Kaori shook Hajime in confusion. Although Hajime tried to say it was a misunderstanding and get away from her, he couldn't get away because Kaori gripped him with such ridiculous strength he had no idea she had. From behind Kaori, "Kaori, please calm down! There's no way she is his daughter, you know!" Shizuku admonished and pinioned her, but it seemed like Kaori did not hear her.

On the other hand, they could hear whispers and rumours coming from the surroundings.

"What's this? A scene of carnage?"

"It looks like, he got another woman pregnant while he has another woman?"

“And not only one or two.”

“Doesn’t it seem like he got five pregnant at the same time?”

“Well, I heard he created a harem and made tens of women pregnant, I think?”

“But, he seemed to have hidden it from the wife.”

“I see… so today he got found out huh.”

“To create a harem… how enviable.”

“What an honorable man… he is better off dead though.”

Apparently, it turned out that Hajime was a married brute who hid the fact that he was the master of a harem and made tens of women pregnant while keeping it a secret from his wife. Hajime, who was currently being shaken by Kaori, was looking at the ceiling with half-closed eyes, and then he leaked a deep sigh while patting Myuu, who wondered what happened and tilted her head.

* * *

The appearance of Kaori, whose head was buried in Shizuku’s chest

with a crimson face, looked as though she wanted to bury herself in a hole. Regaining her composure, she noticed she had shouted something unbelievable, and her embarrassment came in at mach-speed. “It’s okay～, it’s okay,” the appearance of Shizuku comforting her was just like a mother… no, let’s stop here.

Hajime and the others had moved away from the entrance gate and arrived at the plaza in the town’s entrance. After his honor, which had gone up made a sharp fall in the public eyes, he reported to the branch head, Lorr, about the accomplishment of the request. And after two or three conversations, he decided to leave the town quickly to escape the various commotions. To begin with, he had only come here to deliver the letter from Ilwa to Lorr, so there was neither a need to resupply nor problem if they left immediately.

Kouki’s party came back one by one after the leaving Hajime’s party due to following Kaori. Kaori, still writhing in embarrassment, was desperately thinking about what she should do. She had to decide whether she would separate from Hajime as she was or follow him. Her feelings were more inclined to follow him. She didn’t want to separate after they were finally reunited.

However, she could not make a clear decision because of her her guilt from leaving Kouki’s party and how she was shaken by Hajime’s changes. Moreover, there was the effect from her shaking being seen through and sneered at.

Kaori, just like what Yue did to her, had guessed how strong Yue’s feelings were towards Hajime. Following that, more than anything, how Hajime thought of Yue as someone important to him became a thorn that pierced and stuck onto her heart. The two thought of each other. Then, the one-sidedly ridicule, “So that’s the extent of your feelings” doubted the strength of Kaori’s shaken feelings.

She was wondering whether her feelings would lose to Yue's, and now, whether her feelings should be set aside so it would not become a nuisance. But more importantly, was she really looking at the current Hajime beside her? Or was she only thinking of the past Hajime? That, coupled with Yue's extraordinarily high abilities as his partner and how dignified she was made Kaori… overwhelmed. In short, she had lost her confidence in herself as a woman, as a magic-user, and even her feelings towards Hajime.

Finally, it was the time for Hajime's party to leave, and for some reason the atmosphere was full of unrest. Noticing that and raising her face, Kaori saw around ten of men blocking their way.

"Oi oi, just where do you think you are going? You made our comrades into such rag-tags, do you think you can go without an apology? Ah? Ah!?"

The dirty looking armed man smiled inappropriately as he looked at Tio and said. Apparently, they were the comrades of the fellows who previously tried to kidnap Myuu. They came to take revenge on Tio. But, those vulgar gazes were obviously not looking for retribution but something else.

In this town, adventurers should know of the commotion inside the guild and would not go looking for a fight against Hajime. That's why, these men were probably stray mercenaries.

Hajime and some others were gritting their teeth while being amazed at the template-like situation coming from these scum. However, mistaking that as shaking in fear, the failed excuses for

mercenaries began to get carried away.

Their gazes moved towards Yue and Shia, too. The gazes that seemed to licking them made Yue and Shia feel disturbed from the bottom of their hearts and hid behind Hajime. Misunderstanding their actions as being frightened, they began to threaten Hajime who was surrounded by Yue and the girls.

“BRAT! You understand right? Leave the women and quickly disappear if you don’t want to die! Whaa~t, I’ll return them if you properly apologize!”

“Well, they’ll already be broken by that time though.”

Thinking it was amusing, GYAHAHA—, the men laughed. One of them was even lusting after the frightened Myuu, while another was lusting after the Rabbitman, a race usually used as an outlet for human sexual desire. And their fate had been decided now.

Just like the usual, the pressure came attacked the mercenary-like men like a giant waterfall that even made creaks in the air. However, being enraged and could not endure the men’s speeches, Kouki moved out only to get wrapped inside the pressure and trembled. Then, he saw Hajime, not caring about him, walked towards the men from the corner of his view.

Though it was too late, the men tried to apologize because they noticed they had picked a fight against someone they must not. But, on all-fours due from the pressure, they could not even open their mouths, so they could not apologize.

Hajime also didn't want to hear their words anymore. There was already enough reason for Hajime to become mad because they were thinking of making Shia an outlet for their lust, but their malice also had frightened Myuu, so that led to a decision of making them live a life more painful than death.

Hajime loosened the pressure a little and lined up the men who were on their knees, then he unhesitatingly and devilishly shot the symbol of a man starting from the one at the edge. Furthermore, one by one the screaming, groin-holding men were kicked away and piled up in the corner of the plaza with their smashed pelvises. With this, they wouldn't be able to make child or even walk. It was up to each person whether they'd work hard in the future to stay alive or not.

The overly excessive and merciless counterattack made Kouki's party back away. The male students were especially affected and turned pale as they covered their nether regions.

Leering at Kouki's party, Hajime returned to where Yue and the girls were.

"Once again, a merciless one, huh~. As expected of Master. Even though those art women's enemy, doesth not a little sympathy spring up?"

"Usually Hajime-san would not be angry right~. As expected, is it because of Myuu-chan? Looks like the overprotectiveness keeps rising."

“… Nh, though there’s that… Hajime was also angry for Shia.”

“Eh!? Angry for my sake? Ehehe, Hajime-san… thank you very much～.”

“… Yue can immediately seen through me.”

“Nh… of course. It is because I am always looking at Hajime.”

“Yue…”

“Hajime…”

In the end, Hajime and Yue began to create their own world, which Shia retorted, then Myuu jumped to Hajime to be spoiled, and lastly Tio let out perverted remarks that ended in her panting from Hajime’s coldness. These spectacles were connected with Hajime as the core.

Kaori was silently watching Hajime who carried Myuu while being surrounded by Yue and the girls. With the previous spectacle, she understood that Hajime would not hesitate to use violence. It was something vastly different compared to the previous Hajime, and just by seeing it, it became a denial of Hajime’s kindness.

However, she wondered about the reason for Hajime's anger, which made him resort to violence. It was for the sake of the girls that were close to him, so they could enjoy themselves and laugh happily. Really, just how can a person who lost his kindness be surrounded by such smiles. Just how can such a young child yearn for him as a father.

Following that, the disturbance in her mind due to Hajime's changes had dissipated. To begin with, Hajime had returned to the dungeon for the sake of relieving Kaori by informing her his survival. And just like his words, he had returned to the dungeon only for Kaori, but he didn't cast the others away. He saved Meld who received mortal wounds and told his companion to protect Kouki's party.

Kaori noticed it. The reason Hajime unhesitatingly displayed such violence and mercilessness towards his enemy was for the sake of protecting his important people. Of course Kaori herself might also be included inside, but it was a fact that Hajime was thinking for the others' sake. The proof was the smiles from the girls surrounding Hajime.

Kaori guessed it. Hajime had lost his hair color, right eye and left arm, surely because of the severe environment he had lived through. He certainly almost broken down mentally and physically many times. No, it was possible… it was possible that he had already broken which resulted in his changes. Even so, Hajime walked on his path surrounded by those smiles.

That fact made the fog inside Kaori's mind disperse. She could hear the sound of puzzle pieces being rightfully placed. Just what I was hesitating about. There's "Hajime" before her. There's the boy that her heart always thought of. The one who was called

“incompetent,” but crawled from the abyss, gained enormous power, and came to save her.

There were parts that had changed, but there was also unchanged parts. However, that’s something natural. After all, people would always change with time, experiences, and meetings. That’s why, there was no need for her to feel fear. There’s no need for her to lose her confidence. There’s no need for her to back away from him.

If there’s something I don’t know, then it’ll okay if I come to know it while being by his side. Up until now, just like the time we were inside the class. There’s no way the strength of my feelings will lose! There’s nothing wrong with me joining the circle that surrounds Hajime! I won’t let anyone laugh at my feelings anymore!

Resolution and determination were born inside Kaori’s eyes. Shizuku, by her side, was smiling at her best friend’s change. Following that, she silently pushed Kaori’s back. Kaori , with eyes radiating more “strength” than before, nodded to thank Shizuku and moved towards her next battlefield. That’s right, toward her fight as a woman!

Hajime’s party noticed that Kaori was walking towards them. Hajime thought she came to see them off, while Yue by his side, “Muh?,” became wary as she frowned. “Arara?,” Shia was looking at Kaori as her interest deepened, and Tio murmured, “Looks like it’ll be a bloodbath huh～.” Because she was apparently not coming to see them off, Hajime was looking at Kaori, frowning due at the ominous feeling.

“Hajime-kun, can I come with you, too? … No, that’s not it, I will absolutely come with you, so please take care of me, okay?”

“… Hah?”

From the first words spoken, with neither preface nor wish-washing, it became a development where everything was decided and made Hajime’s eyes turn into dots. Inadvertently, he leaked such a stupefied voice. In place of Hajime, who could not immediately regain his composure due to being dumbfounded, Yue moved out.

“… You are not qualified for that.”

“What qualification? Is it to always think of Hajime? Then, I won’t lose to anyone, you know?”

Kaori calmly replied Yue’s words. Yue, “Mmhmp,” made her mouth into ^.

Kaori matched her gaze to Yue’s, then she abruptly moved her unshakable gaze towards Hajime. Following that, she united her hand before her chest with blushing cheeks, took a deep breath, then with desperate and trembling voice, she spoke to him… thus she conveyed it.

“I love you.”

“… Shirasaki.”

Kaori’s expression was mix of embarrassment, worrying while she was expecting Hajime’s answer, and happiness coming from being able to convey her feelings to him. Thus, with those mixed feeling, she didn’t back away, displaying her determination.

That gaze, filled with determination and sincerity made Hajime answered her with serious eyes.

“I have a woman I am in love with. So I can’t answer Shirasaki’s feelings. Therefore, I can’t take you with me.”

Hajime’s clear answer made Kaori immediately bite her lip as if she wanted to cry, but in the next moment, power was born inside the eyes that were about to spill tears and she raised her face. Thus she nodded to tell him she understood. Behind Kaori, Kouki and the others were in blank surprise, agape, and in a pandemonium-like situation, but not minding them, Kaori spun her desired words.

“… Un, I know. It’s Yue-san, right?”

“Yeah, that’s why…”

“But, I don’t think that can be a reason for me not to be at Hajime-kun’s side.”

“What?”

“Because, Shia-san and the slightly strange Tio-san are also in love with Hajime-kun, right? Especially Shia-san, I feel she is pretty serious about it.”

“… That’s…”

“Even though Hajime-kun, with you already having your own special person, she still doesn’t give up and wants to be at Hajime-kun’s side, and also, Hajime-kun lets her be so. That’s why, it wouldn’t be a problem if I am there too, right? After all, my feelings for Hajime-kun… won’t lose to anyone.”

Saying so, Kaori turned her blazing, strong gaze towards Yue. What was expressed was, My feelings won’t lose to you! I won’t let you laugh at them!, and Yue could see Kaori’s strong will. That was definitely a declaration of war. It was a declaration that she’d steal the one and only “special seat” from Yue.

Receiving Kaori’s piercing gaze from the front, Yue, unusually, turned her lips in a smile that could be understood by anyone as fearless.

“… I see, then come with us. And there I will teach you. Our differences, that is.”

“Not you, it’s Kaori.”

“… Then, just call me Yue. I accept Kaori’s challange.”

“Fufu, Yue. Don’t cry if you lose, kay?”

“… Fu, fufufufufu.”

“Aha, ahahahahaha.”

Yue and Kaori created a world of their own with a different meaning than the time Yue did it with Hajime. Even though Hajime was the one confessed to, he was being put aside before he was aware of it, and, in such a manner, in the end it was decided Kaori would enter his party making Hajime look into the far distance. Seeing Yue and Kaori who were laughing together, Shia and Myuu by his side were hugging him, trembling.

“Ha-Hajime-san! Is something wrong with my eyes? I can see dark clouds and draconic lightning behind Yue-san!”

“… Isn’t that normal? Even I can see a katana holding Hanya behind Shirasaki.”

“Papaa～! Those Onee-chan are scaryy.”

“Haa haa, thee are somehow… if you turn your gazes to this one… ngh, can’t hold it.”

With Satan? appearing behind each of them, Yue and Kaori laughed with daunting pose. Were you those kinds of characters?, Hajime wanted to retort with that, but he decided to wait for them to stop while soothing Myuu, who was clinging to him, because those words would become a boomerang back at him. He is now the so called good-for-nothing.

But, there was someone who objected towards Kaori’s will… and of course it was the “Hero”, Amanokawa Kouki.

“Wa-Wait! Please wait a sec! I don’t understand this. Kaori likes Nagumo? She wants to follow him? Eh? What does this mean? How, how did it suddenly come to this? Nagumo! You, just what have you done to Kaori.”

“… the heck is with this one.”

Apparently, Kouki could not admit the reality of Kaori falling for Hajime. It was not something that came out of the blue as Kouki was the only one who didn’t notice it, but in Kouki’s eyes, he only saw it as Kaori suddenly doing something strange and the cause being Hajime. Really, Kouki’s mind that only saw things in the way that would be convenient for him made Hajime retort instinctively.

Being completely convinced that Hajime did something to Kaori, Kouki indignantly moved with partly drawn Holy Sword in hand which made Shizuku admonish him, with a gesture was as though

she was enduring a headache.

“Kouki. Can’t you see Nagumo-kun didn’t do anything? Please think about it calmly. Though it looks like you didn’t notice it, Kaori has thought of him in that way since long ago. I mean, since the time we were still in Japan. Just try to think about what Kaori always talked about.”

“Shizuku… what are you saying… that’s, that’s because Kaori is kind, so she feels sorry for Hajime who was always alone, right? There’s neither connection nor motive, so there’s no way Kaori would like an otaku like Hajime.”

Hearing Kouki and Shizuku’s conversation, Hajime unexpectedly became agitated as that was said straight to his face, his cheek twitching.

Noticing the commotion from Kouki and the others, Kaori spoke towards Kouki and the classmates behind him to make herself clear.

“Kouki-kun, everyone, I am sorry. I know it is selfish of me… but I, I want to go with Hajime-kun by any means. That’s why, I will leave your party. Truly, I am sorry.”

Kaori said so as she bowed deeply, making Suzu, Eri, Ayako, and Mao, the female circle, yell Kyaa— Kyaa—. Nagayama, Endou, and Nomura, the three who had guessed Kaori’s feelings were waving their hands to tell her not to worry about it with wry smiles.

However, Kouki, of course, could not accept Kaori's words.

"It's a lie, right? After all, that's weird. Kaori has always been by my side… so shouldn't it be the same from now on too? Kaori is my childhood friend… that's why… it's natural for her to be by my side. Isn't that so, Kaori?"

"Umm… Kouki-kun. It is true that we are childhood friends… but, it doesn't mean we will be always together, you know? I think this is the natural way…"

"That's right, Kouki. It's not like Kaori is yours, and it's Kaori herself that will choose what she does. So, drop it already."

Being told so by his two childhood friends, Kouki was dumbfounded. His gaze immediately moved towards Hajime. Hajime was looking in the distance, expressing that this had nothing to do with him. Beside Hajime were a beautiful woman and beautiful girls in attendance. Seeing that spectacle, Kouki's eyes began to gradually looking up. Inside him, he was thinking about his Kaori, and dark feeling he never felt before sprang up. Thus following his impulse, he fully interpreted things at his own convenience.

"Kaori. You must not go with him. I am saying this for your sake. Just look at that Nagumo. He is attended by several girls, even a small child like that… moreover, he even made a girl from the Rabbitman tribe wear a slave collar. Even that black-haired woman called Hajime "Master" before. Surely, she was compelled to call him that. I am sure Nagumo is collecting women or something

along those lines. He is the worst. He easily killed a person and he didn't want to cooperate with us, his comrades, even though he has those powerful weapons. Kaori, you'll only be unhappy if you go along with him. That's why, it is better if you stay here. No, just stay here. Even if you are going to hate me, I am going to stop you for your sake. I will absolutely not let you go with him!"

Kouki's overly erratic objection made Kaori and the others dumbfounded. However, the heated up Kouki couldn't be stopped. His gaze which was looking at Kaori to persuade her turned towards Yue and the girls by Hajime's side as if he thought of something.

"You girls, too. There's no more need for you to be by that man's side. Come with me! I welcome people with abilities like you. Let's save people together. Shia, was it? There's no need to worry, I will immediately release you from slavery if you come with me. Tio too, it's okay for you to not call him Master."

Saying so with a refreshing smile, Kouki outstretched his hand towards Yue and the girls. Shizuku was facepalming and looking at the sky while Kaori was covering her opened mouth.

Yue and the girls who received the invitation along with Kouki's smile were…

"""" …"""""

They were speechless. They averted their gazes from Kouki and rubbed both of their own arms. If one looked carefully, Yue and the

girls were having goosebumps. In a way, they received considerable damage. Even Tio said, “Somehow, this feels wrong…,” as she frowned at the cold feeling she felt.

Seeing their appearances, Kouki who outstretched his hand had his smile cramped. Far from looking at him, the girls were hurriedly hiding behind Hajime while looking disgustedly at him which shocked Kouki.

Then, that shock changed into anger which displayed in his action. He rashly drew the Holy Sword, aiming at Hajime. Kouki could no longer be stopped by words, he thrust the Holy Sword into the ground and pointed his finger at Hajime as he declared,

“Nagumo Hajime! Duel me! Throw away your weapon and fight me barehanded! If I win, don’t ever come close to Kaori again! Also, you must release those girls!”

“… Ouch, ouch, ouch. This is bad. It’s a more painful hero than I expected. It looks like he couldn’t see that he is being a pain though.”

“What are you mumbling about! Are you scared?!”

Stabbing the Holy Sword into the ground and declaring a bare-handed duel after drawing the sword was surely because he felt that he’d lose to Hajime if they used weapons. Though it was actually unknown whether he did it intentionally or not… Yue, Shia, Myuu, Tio, Kaori and the others were indeed taken aback by Kouki’s speech and behavior.

However, Kouki firmly believed that he was in the right and got worked up on saving his childhood friend and the unhappy girls from Hajime which made him unable to notice the surrounding atmosphere. To begin with, the strong conviction that made him doing such a reckless thing was the “envy” he that he felt for the first time, and he was completely out of control.

Without hearing Hajime’s approval, Kouki dashed out. Sighing, Hajime took two, three steps back. Seeing that, Kouki thought Hajime was frightened from fighting without a weapon and put more power into his dash. Just several steps before his fist reached Hajime, Hajime lowered his hands, not reacting to anything in particular. Kouki thought Hajime couldn’t react to him and was convinced of his victory.

At that moment,

THUUUMP!

“Kh!?”

Kouki disappeared.

More accurately, at the moment he put maximum power to his last step to put more power into his fist, he fell. He fell into a pitfall. At the beginning, the reason Hajime moved back two, three steps was to create transmutation magic array using his shoes to create a hole with a four meter depth under the surface.

The pitfall was immediately returned into stone pavement after it swallowed Kouki. Next, explosions could be heard from under the surface. At the moment Hajime transmuted the pitfall, he used that opportunity to transfer flash grenade, shock grenade, paralyze grenade, and tear grenade from “Treasure Box” into the hole.

While he was underground, the impact from explosions attacked Kouki who tried to escape, then his vision went dark with the flash, his eyes and nose flooded from the tear grenade, and lastly his body was in agony and stiffening because of the paralysis.

Hajime silently used transmutation again and hardened the ground around Kouki as hard as the two-tailed wolf. And now, because he’d likely to die due to being deprived of fresh air, he created a small hole for ventilation.

During that time, to the onlookers, it looked like Hajime didn’t do anything but stood only to take Kouki’s resentment, and then Kouki rushed forward, alone which ended with him disappearing down the hole alone; it made him looked terribly… silly.

“Ah~, Yaegashi. He is still alive, so dig him out later.”

“… I have a lot of things I want to ask… but, roger that.”

Leave the troublesome Kouki to Yaegashi Shizuku!, it was a tacit understanding since the time they were in Japan. Hajime pushing the troublesome thing onto her made Shizuku leak a sigh while

covering one of her eyes. Finally, the nuisance was gone.

… Was what he thought, but this time Hiyama's gang made a commotion. As for the reason, the hole left by Kaori was just too great. There was also the previous incident with the demon race woman, and they'd likely to die in the future if Kaori left them. That's why they repeatedly tried to persuade Kaori to remain with them. Especially Hiyama, he intensely objected. His appearance… was in a panic, as though the thing he desired for so long which was about to come into his possession was disappearing.

Hiyama's gang of four realized it was difficult to persuade or change Kaori's decision, and this time they began to persuade Hajime to remain with them. We apologize about the past, so let's get along from now on, such and so forth was said unabashedly.

They didn't actually mean what they said, but they made friendly smiles as they snuck peeks at Hajime's mood, but not only Hajime, but Shizuku and the others were also disgusted by them. Within that situation, Hajime, for the first time looked at Hiyama's eyes from a close distance since their reunion. Inside those eyes, maybe due to the effect of Kaori leaving, Hajime could see madness.

Shizuku and the others admonished Hiyama's gang and once again it turned into a commotion, but because there was such an opportunity, Hajime decided to talk to Hiyama to confirm the truth about that day and to resolve the current situation.

"Naa, Hiyama. Has your fire magic skill increased?"

“…Eh?”

The sudden question made Hiyama dumbfounded. However, his complexion gradually turned pale as he noticed the meaning behind it.

“Wh-What are you saying. I am the vanguard… and my element with the highest aptitude is Wind.”

“Hee, I thought you were surely had a fire element.”

“A-Aren’t you mistaken? Just what are you trying to say all of a sudden…”

“Then, you must have liked fire element magic. Especially something like fireball. I wonder if you would unintentionally use it?”

“…”

Now, the color of Hiyama’s face had changed from blue to white. Seeing that reaction, Hajime was convinced. Next, Hajime guessed his motive from his panicked attitude from Kaori separating from them. Well,as for why Hajime hadn’t attacked Hiyama up till now was because he was sneaking looks at Kaori.

Hajime himself, currently, had not even a shred of feeling burning

with revenge. Though he'd be merciless if one was hostile to him, he planned to leave Hiyama as he was. If he retaliated here, it would be troublesome as there was no value in being burdened by a dispute against Kouki's party just because of Hiyama. For Hajime, the existences of Hiyama and his gang were truly worthless just like the pebbles by the roadside.

Hajime moved away from the silent Hiyama and mercilessly informed Hiyama's gang, with Kondou and the others included.

"There's no need for you to apologize as I don't mind the past. For me, you guys are worthless. Thus I don't want to know what you are going to say. If you understand, scram now! You're so irritating!"

Although Kondou and the others were angered by Hajime's words, "Hiyamaaa. You should understand, right?," Hajime said so with full smile, and then Hiyama's body shook and he silently nodded, followed by him telling Kondou and the others to stop. Hiyama once again came to know that Hajime had noticed something about him, including what Hajime didn't express, and he matched him.

Kondou and the others were dubious due at the sudden change in Hiyama's attitude, but Hiyama's abnormal attitude, as if he was killing his emotions, made them reluctantly give up on persuading Hajime.

Finally, truly finally, the nuisances who disturbed the departure of Hajime's party had gone. Kaori went back to the inn to get her luggage (Hajime used his "Pressure" to stop Hiyama's gang from following her). Leering at Ryuutarou and the others trying to dig Kouki up, Hajime now was talking with Shizuku.

“What can I say… I am sorry for everything. Also, let me thank you again. Thank you, for saving us, for surviving, and for coming here to meet with Kaori…”

Shizuku, who apologized about the trouble and thanked him for rescuing them and returning to Kaori, made Hajime laugh, inadvertently. Shizuku showed a dubious expression due to Hajime sudden burst of laughter. Her gaze was asking, “What is it?”

“No, sorry. What can I say, I thought you are worldly-wise as usual, so I inadvertently laughed. Even while we were in Japan, you were the one who quietly did the apologizing and thanking. It’s still the same, even in this different world… but keep it in moderation or your wrinkle will increase, you know?”

“… You’ve been a big help. Also, you have considerably changed. To have that many girls to wait upon you, along with a daughter… I couldn’t imagine this from you while we were still in Japan…”

“I only love one person though…”

“… I don’t have the obligation to say anything and I also understand that it is not my place to say it… but at least I want you to take care of Kaori. I implore you.”

“…”

Hajime didn't answer. More than that he didn't want to answer Kaori's feelings, honestly, he never thought of letting her come along. But in the end, he let Yue have her way… but he wondered why the woman he fell for permitted one woman after another… Why did it come to this?, Hajime was looking into the far distance as he thought that he was spoiling Yue too much.

Towards Hajime, whose attitude said he didn't hear anything, Shizuku's spirit as a best friend raised a growl.

"… If you don't take care of her… it'll become serious matter."

" ? Serious matter? What do you…"

"Have you heard "White-haired, eye-patched Punisher"?"

"…What?"

"Or maybe, written as "Round of Destruction" and read as "Outbreak," how about it?"

"Wait a sec, you, just what are you…"

"There are also others such as "Jet-black Tyrant" or "Transmutation Master of Red Thunder," you know?"

“Y-Yo-You, don’t tell me…”

Shizuku suddenly began to enumerate unknown names, which made Hajime look dubious at the beginning. But, noticing Shizuku joyfully looking at Hajime from head to toe, he turned pale as he understood what she meant.

“Fufufu, right now I am a “God’s Apostle” and a member of the Hero’s party. What I said will surely spread. It is equal to the network of neighboring housewives. Well then, Nagumo-kun, what kind of nickname do you want… I will make one that fairly describes your appearance and grandly make it known, okay?”

“Wait, just, wait! Why, how did you know such a damaging thing!?”

“It is because I studied about it with Kaori. That girl wanted to talk with Nagumo-kun, so she studied otaku culture like manga and anime so they could become a topic of conversation. I went along with her every time… that’s why I’ve gathered quite the knowledge about it. Certainly, people like the current Nagumo-kun are called “chuuni…””

“Stoop-! Please stop that”

“O-Oh my, it is more effective than what I imagined… looks like you are aware of it yourself.”

“Th-This devil…”

Hajime had already fallen to his knees. The black history that truly happened in his middle school years was revived. The memory that had been sealed deep inside him, “You rang?” said thus as it peeked out its face.

“Fufu, so, take care of Kaori, okay?”

“…”

“Fuu, Requiem of Ruin (Shotgun of Chaos), Revived Disaster (Reverse Calamity)…”

“Okay! I will do it, so please don’t make such painful nicknames.”

“Take care of Kaori, okay?”

“… At the very least, I promise that I won’t treat her unkindly.”

“Eeh, that’s enough for me. After all, it seems you’ll be mad at me if I go any further than this… if you break the promise, be prepared for a novel with you as the main character published in this world and Japan too, okay?”

“You, aren’t you actually the last boss here? You are, right?”

Hajime held his head as he was on the verge of going mad from embarrassment. Yue, the girls, and the other classmates that were looking at Hajime from a slight distance were shuddering at how Shizuku used only words to make the overwhelmingly powerful Hajime fall to his knees.

While Hajime was fighting against his dark history due to this and that from his appearance, Kaori came back, running. Next, she became pop-eyed when she saw Hajime hanging his head before Shizuku.

Worried about Shizuku, Kaori asked the details from Yue and they exchanged information. Finishing their conversation, Yue, “Muu～,” groaned at Shizuku who defeated Hajime with only words. Kaori had also remembered that the two often talked with each other quietly… and she looked alternately between Hajime and Shizuku. Following that, the two reached a conclusion. Don’t tell me, is she the last boss of this fight as a woman?, something like that.

Yue wore an indescribable expression and Kaori was worrying. Then, it was finally time for Hajime’s party to leave. Shizuku, Suzu, the other female students, and Nagayama’s party, along with Meld who finished reporting, were gathered at Hol-ad’s entrance to see them off. Following that, when Hajime took out the magic-driven four-wheeler, all of them were once again surprised.

While Shizuku and Kaori mutually struggling to separate their hands in regret, Hajime took out a sword with a black sheath from “Treasure Box” and handed it to Shizuku.

“This is?”

“Yaegashi, you are losing the one who can spoil you, right? Then, just take it. Even if you are worldly-wise, you can’t be “healed (mentally)” from being separated from Shirasaki. Maa, there’s also the various things I am indebted to you for from Japan.”

Shizuku accepted the sword from Hajime and slowly drew it from its sheath, and a jet-black sword that seemed to absorb even light appeared. There was no blade crest, it had a slight curve and became double edged around the tip. It resembled the sword called Shoukarasuma. Though Hajime only knew a little about Japanese swords, it was created similarly using transmutation just like the short swords he handed over to the Haulia.

“I can guarantee its strength because it was made from the compressed, hardest ore in this world, and its sharpness is at the level where even an amateur can cut steel by swinging it. About the maintenance… there’s no need to say it to Yaegashi, but please take care of it.”

“… Such an amazing thing… as expected of a Transmutation Master. Thank you. I won’t hold back and will accept it.”

After one swing, two swings, the balance as it cut through the wind made Shizuku respond with admiration, and she honestly thanked him as she smiled. Truthfully, because Shizuku’s swordsmanship was Yaegashi-styled, naturally it required a Japanese sword, and she felt disoriented every time she used her techniques using her previous sword. That’s why she was truly happy to obtain a Katana

which made her float a natural, lovely smile.

“… Last Boss?”

“… Shizuku-chan.”

“Eh? What? You two, why are you looking at me with such eyes?”

Yue’s gaze, full of caution, and Kaori’s gaze, full of worry, made Shizuku flustered as she didn’t know the meaning behind them. Leaving behind that indescribable atmosphere, Shizuku and the others saw Hajime’s party out of Hol-ad.

The weather was good. Their destination was one of the Seven Great Dungeons «Guryuu-en Great Volcano» in «Guryuu-en Great Desert». With increasing liveliness from acquiring a new companion, Hajime continued his journey.

Arifureta: Volume 9 Chapter 1

Chapter 81 of the Web Novel.

Madness and Jealousy

“Shit! Shit! What’s with this! What kind of joke is this!”

It was midnight. Inside a park located on the outskirts of the post town, Hol-ad, one boy was cursing in a hushed voice, punching one of the trees repeatedly. It was Hiyama Daisuke. Hiyama’s eyes were shaking intensely in hatred, agitation, and impatience. Those were truly ugly and impure eyes, from which it was not an exaggeration to they were full of madness.

“As I thought, you really did lose your temper… well, I know it can’t be helped though. After all, your precious, precious princess Kaori was snatched by another man before your eyes, right?”

A voice filled with scorn and slight sympathy rang out from behind such a Hiyama. Fwip, Hiyama immediately turned around. Next, he momentarily raised an expression of relief when he recognized the other person was the one he meeting in secret, and, following that, with his fists clenched, he replied with a voice that was just like a beast’s howl.

“Shut up! Shit! This… this shouldn’t have happened! Why, why is that bastard alive!? Just why did he did that…”

“Don’t be distracted by yourself, I want to have a talk, you know? Also, it will become a serious matter if someone sees us meeting in secret.”

“… I, I don’t have anymore reasons to go along with you… my Kaori is already…”

In between the trees’ shadows created by the moonlight was a person’s silhouette, to whom Hiyama bitterly spoke as he pummeled his fists on the tree.

Hiyama cooperating with this person was only because he heard that he would be able to make Kaori his own. That’s why, with Kaori leaving, he had lost his reason to cooperate, and it was too late to threaten him with exposing his attempt to kill Hajime as the victim could have said it himself.

However, the person in the darkness smiled as its mouth turned curved into a crescent at such a Hiyama, and it once again tempted him just like the devil.

“If she is snatched then just snatch her back. Is it wrong? Fortunately, we have good bait here.”

“…Bait?”

Not knowing what it meant, Hiyama dubiously tilted his head which made that person grinned and nodded.

“That’s right, bait. Even if she puts priority on her feelings and parts from those comrades of hers… her best friends that were always by her side, her childhood friends… do you think she can just leave them be? Especially if she knows they are in a predicament.”

“You…”

“It is easy to call her back. So, there’s no need to be pessimistic about it. Especially in this case, even I got a chill… but I am glad that it resulted in something convenient for me. Yup, it could be said as a godsend. Shall we finish everything once we return to the Imperial Capital? Then… you will surely obtain what you desire, you know?”

“…”

Though knowing it was useless, Hiyama glared at his accomplice that stayed in the shadow. Even receiving his gaze, the person before Hiyama laughed normally.

Though he didn’t know all of this person’s plan, from their previous words, Hiyama could have guessed that it’d involve injuring the other classmates. For their own objective, they could easily betrayed their comrades, with whom they shared joy and sorrow with. Following that, a chill ran down in his spine as he couldn’t feel any guilt from that person.

(A nasty person as always… but, I also cannot back down anymore… I must do it to get my Kaori back… that's all. There's nothing to hesitate about. This is for Kaori. I am the justice here.)

Hiyama only thought of himself and his confusion had already been disappeared. Because of his accomplice, he was made to look away from the thing he must see, believing that his action was justified, while it all stemmed from his desire for Kaori.

The silhouette turned silent as it understood Hiyama's feelings. Smiling, it waited for Hiyama's answer.

"… Okay. Just like before, I will lend you a hand. However…"

"Aah, I understand. I will obtain what I desired, and you will obtain yours. Give and take, isn't that a nice word? From now on is crucial. The case in the Imperial Capital too, can I leave that to you?"

Without minding Hiyama's distorted expression, that person turned on their heels and disappeared, as if merging with the space between the trees. Afterwards, what was left was the fallen boy whose eyes were filled with darkness.

* * *

On the other hand, at the time the suspicious meeting happened in the outskirts of the town, another boy and girl were also standing under the moonlight.

They weren't in the location where the secret meeting happened, they were on a small, arched bridge, above one of the waterways that passed through between the shops and back alleys of the town. A lot of waterways were built for the large number of restaurants and service buildings, and the boy on the bridge was looking down on the flowing water's surface as it reflected the moon above it, under the moonlight.

More accurately, he wasn't looking but "drooping his head", moreover, his expression was dark, far from its usual shine. The boy's appearance was just like that a person whose company bankrupted, incurred large amount of debt, and was now despairing about his future as he looked far into the distance, into the twilight. It was our hero, Amanogawa Kouki.

"… Do you not want to talk?"

A voice called out to Kouki who didn't look away from the moon reflected on the water surface. It was his childhood friend for ten years, the pair of the girl that went away, Yaegashi Shizuku.

Unlike Kouki, Shizuku was entrusting her back to the bridge's railing, looking up at the moon in the sky. Towards the railing, her trademark ponytail was swaying, playing in the wind. Without looking at his childhood friend, and Shizuku who also not looking at him, Kouki replied as he continued to look at the moon.

“Is there something you want to say?”

“…”

There was no answer, no, Kouki just could not answer her. Even though he was looking at the moon reflected on the water’s surface, what was in his mind was the spectacle of Kaori speaking her feelings. Within her anxiety and rejoice, as if praying, she spoke her feelings without any hint of a lie, which even convinced Kouki, whose denseness was at the level of a chronic disease.

Kouki and Kaori were friends for around ten years, but he was hurt when he saw her beautiful strength, he had never seen Kaori made such expressions. It was just like a bolt out of the blue for him.

Every time he recalled her expression, an unspeakable feeling sprang up in his mind. It was dark and heavy, a truly murky feeling. Unconditionally, without any basis, he believed his thought was a natural one. That was that, his childhood friend, Kaori, would always be by his side, without any change. It could be said he thought of Kaori as his. In other words, he was jealous.

That jealousy, Kouki himself didn’t know as to whether it came from love or just his desire to monopolize her, but the feeling that she was “snatched” from him was swirling in his mind, intensely.

However, it was Kaori herself that decided to go along with the one who “snatched” her away, Hajime (though he would surely object to it). Moreover, he didn’t want to believe and tried to deny the existence called Hajime by challenging him to a duel where he was

defeated. His misery, resentment towards Hajime, doubts about Kaori's feelings, and a lot of other feelings were mixed together, making Kouki's mind a mess, just like the inside of kicked trash can.

Thus he kept looking at the water and unbeknownst to him, his other childhood friend was already standing beside him without saying anything… his reply from before was also truly not like him. Unable to find his next word, Kouki turned silent.

Sneaking a glance at such a Kouki, Shizuku frowned her brows and with an atmosphere that expressed "It can't be helped," she moved her mouth.

"… Right now, Kouki, you are being a pain."

"… A pain?"

Shizuku's unexpected reply made Kouki inadvertently parrot her. Shizuku moved her gaze from the moon towards Kouki, and continued her words.

"That's right. About Kaori, from the beginning she isn't yours, you know?"

"… That's… then, are you saying she is Nagumo's?"

Prick, Kouki's eyes were shaking as he guessed that, he desperately tried to object that as if cursing it. Hearing that, Shizuku answered with a strong forehead flick. "It hurt-!?," Kouki instinctively covered his forehead, and leering at him, Shizuku scolded him with a cold voice.

"Idiot. Kaori is her own. Whatever she chooses, wherever she goes, it is up to Kaori to decide that. Of course, even who she wants to be with… is up to her own decision."

"… Since when? Shizuku, you must have known that, right?"

Without asking "what do you mean," Shizuku nodded.

"You know… Kaori met Nagumo-kun in middle school… Well, he must have forgotten about it… Rather I also don't know in what kind of situation they met."

"…What's with that. Just what are you trying to say?"

"That is for you to ask Kaori yourself. After all, it is bad for me to say it without her permission."

"Then, the reason Kaori was always talking to Nagumo in class was truly… that is… because she loves… him?"

"Hmm, that's right."

“…”

Shizuku easily told him the truth he didn’t want to hear, which made Kouki make a reproachful gaze. However, Shizuku only thought of it as a passing wind. Angered by her attitude, just like a child throwing a tantrum, Kouki began to spit out what was in his mind.

“… Why, why is it Nagumo. When we were still in Japan, he was an otaku, unmotivated, and he nothing special in terms of sports or studies either… always forcing his laugh, and being out of place… He took a noncommittal attitude whenever Kaori talked to him… he was an otaku… if it was me, I wouldn’t treat Kaori coldly. I’d always think of her as important, and I would do my best for Kaori’s sake… Besides, Nagumo was waited upon by those girls in such a manner, isn’t he the lowest to treat them like that? Not only that, he is a murderer! He killed a non-resisting woman. So, do you think I was wrong!? That’s right, it is strange for Kaori to like such a bastard after all. He surely must have “SWISh!” Guhah!?”

Heating up as he spoke, Kouki began to badmouth Hajime with fabricated truths which once again awarded him a forehead flick (No Beat ver.) from Shizuku. What are you doing!?, was conveyed by Kouki’s glare which was ignored by Shizuku who was wearing an amazed expression.

“Again, your bad habit is coming out, you know? I’ve kept saying until now that you should stop interpreting things at your own convenience.

“Interpreting things to my convenience… there’s no way—”

“Haven’t you noticed it yet? Kouki, you don’t know anything about Nagumo-kun, right? You don’t know anything about the time we were still in Japan or in this world… and those girls looked happy, no, they really were happy, you see? But you ignored that fact and said something selfish… The current Kouki is only trying to make Hajime out to be a bad person who is unsuitable for Kaori. If that isn’t called as interpreting things at your own convenience, then what is?”

“B-But… it is the true he killed a person.”

“… At that time, even I was about to kill her. However, I couldn’t muster my strength. Even in the future… if a similar thing happens, then I will surely swing my sword to kill, for the sake of surviving, for the sake of the people important to me. Though I don’t know whether I can do it, since I will only know when the time comes… For now, the thing I did was only attempted murder… but, are you going to despise me if I become a murderer?”

Shizuku’s confession made Kouki speechless. His childhood friend, Shizuku, held a stronger sense of responsibility and justice than others, so he suddenly felt like she was a distant existence after hearing she was truly going to kill. However, Kouki shook his head when he noticed the shadow of anxiety and the fear of injuring a person in Shizuku’s bitter smile.

Seeing Kouki’s reaction, Shizuku continued her words which could be called a soliloquy.

“Certainly, his transformation is surprising… and thinking about his character when we were still in Japan, it’s not an exaggeration to say he’s a different person… Well, even so, it looks like Kaori still thought of him as “Nagumo Hajime,” and it looks like not all of him has changed… but one thing you must not forget, he fought that woman to save us and killed her in our stead.”

“… Are you saying it is right to kill.”

“I… I don’t think it is right. A murder is a murder after all… I can neither justify it nor do I want to.”

“Then…”

“Even so, we aren’t qualified to criticize Nagumo-kun. It was no one’s fault, but our own weakness…”

In short, he should solve it himself if he has a problem with it. It was simply that he was not strong enough, so he couldn’t reach the result he hoped for. It was a mistake to complain about the result to the person he left everything with.

Noticing the unexpressed words, Kouki recalled that he could only crawl at the time Hajime displayed his peerlessness. Unable to object, he fell into sullen silence. His dissatisfied expression was obviously saying, “But, it is the truth that he killed a person!”

Towards Kouki's obstinacy, with an admonishing tone, Shizuku tacitly warned him about what had happened thus far, along with what she felt after coming to this world.

"I don't hate Kouki's straightforward sense of justice."

"… Shizuku."

"However. I think it's about time for you to start doubting whether you are actually in the right."

"Doubting my justice?"

"Certainly, a strong feeling is necessary to get things done. But, a distortion will surely appear if you don't doubt it and just keep moving on, blindly believing on it. That's why when that happens, I want you to react to it by wondering if you are really in the right, or whether you still need to do it "even" if you know it is wrong… it isn't bad if you continue to think like that, okay? … truthfully, it is difficult to keep on living rightfully. Having come to this world, I cut lives even though they were demonic beasts… I've come to think so."

Totally ignorant that Shizuku was thinking thus every time she killed a demonic beast, Kouki became pop-eyed.

"Kouki. You are not always the correct one and even if you are in the right. You should know that your rightfulness can become a

lethal weapon. Well, the way you interpreted things at your convenience this time was not coming from your conviction of "justice," it was coming from your jealousy."

"N-no, for me to feel jealous…"

"It is uncool to make an excuse to deceive me here, you know?"

"…"

Kouki once again cast his gaze down, looking at the moon on the water surface. However, the dark mood from a while ago had weakened, and he seemed to be thinking deeply about something. Anyway, he had avoided rushing into a spiral of negativity, and Shizuku leaked out a relieved sigh, knowing that.

Thus, thinking it was necessary to leave him alone for now, Shizuku stopped leaning on the railing and tried to quietly leave the place. Then, Kouki's mutter came from behind Shizuku, who had already turned on her heels.

"Shizuku… you won't go anywhere, right?"

"… What's with this all of a sudden?"

"… Please don't go, Shizuku."

“…”

Kouki’s words were as if he was petitioning her. It was a line that would made the female students in Japan and the girls of the Kingdom that fell for him go kya kya, but unfortunately, Shizuku only displayed an “amazed” expression. He might be weakened by the feeling of loss because Kaori had gone… Shizuku looked over her shoulder, towards the blurring moon. It was the moon that was on water surface which Kouki had been looking at previously.

“At the very least I am not like the “moon”… I won’t just leave a man that is depending on me.”

Saying thus, Shizuku left the place. Left behind, Kouki watched the alley where Shizuku disappeared for a while, then once again, he looked at the moon reflected on the water surface. Next, he noticed the meaning behind her words.

“… I see… the moon reflected on the water’s surface.”

Flowers reflected on a mirror and the moon reflected on the water’s surface. Those were words speaking about a thing that could be seen but not be reached, visible but with no substance, just like a reflection. He unconsciously looked at the reflected moon as Kaori, and certainly it was not something he could reach. Especially after seeing Kaori’s expression at the time she confessed her feelings to Hajime.

Shizuki said she was not “the moon reflected on the water’s surface”. So, it’s possible for him to reach her. However, her next words were severe. Kouki inadvertently made a wry smile. He thought about what he had just said to his childhood friend.

Kouki stopped looking at the reflected moon, he looked up at the sky. He had unconditionally believed that he could reach “it” if he just stretched out his hand, but he realized “it” was awfully quite far. Letting out a deep sigh, Kouki began to think about the words coming from his strict and gentle childhood friend.

To change or not to change… it was up to Kouki.

Arifureta: Volume 9 Chapter 2

Chapter 82 of the Web Novel.

Aiko's Disappearance

Prologue of fourth arc.

The event happened sometime later.

Three weeks had passed since the time Kouki's party had received shock from the reunion and the complex feelings because of to the separation in «Post Town, Hol-ad».

Currently, there was one thing Kouki's party must immediately deal with: to kill people. They wouldn't be able to fight anymore as long as it was not dealt with, so they returned to the Imperial Capital. It was necessary for them to experience "murder" if they wanted to participate in the war against the Demon race. They would only be liabilities in the war if they could not overcome it.

To begin with, they wouldn't be able to think about it properly since not much time remained. The event that occurred in Ul had already reached their ears. It was obvious the Demon race's movement had became more active since they themselves had also been attacked, and everyone could guess the war was drawing near. Therefore, as quickly as possible, Kouki's party wanted to overcome this problem by all means.

Currently, Kouki's party were doing battle practice against the Knights commanded by Meld. Ryuutarou, Kondou's party, and Hiyama's gang; those who were already prepared for it actually repeatedly asked themselves if they could really do it after seeing Hajime shoot the Demon race woman's head. There wasn't much time left, but they would be broken if they were forced to murder, so Meld and the Knights were also looking for a solution.

Towards the gloomy them, a small, good news had arrived.

It was the return of Aiko's party. Normally, Kouki's charisma would be able to pull the classmates together. However, the hero was depressed, which made everyone depressed, too. The reason for them not to be broken from the severe defeat and the current problem was thanks to Suzu's mood making which followed by the prudent people such as Shizuku and Nagayama. Even so, their minds swallowed by uneasiness forced themselves to look more than welcoming to the adult they were familiar with and trusted. Everyone truly wanted to meet the teacher who always did her best for her students.

Hearing Aiko had returned, Shizuku made the first move. Shizuku wanted to consult AIko about various things, so she rounded up her training. She also wanted to hear the impression of the classmates who met Hajime much earlier than her, and she wanted to exchange information objectively with Aiko who neither assume nor prejudices.

Wearing the jet-black sheath she received from Hajime and belt for another jet-black, double-edged sword, Shizuku walked through the passage in royal palace. Her appearance somehow made more

noble ladies and maids blush comparable to other men. It was a problem that haunted Shizuku even in this different world. She really wanted to be spared from being called “Onee-sama” by the women who were older than her.

Having heard the things Hajime did in Ul, Shizuku wanted to directly asked Aiko as to what she thought of Hajime. Depending on Aiko’s impression of Hajime, Kouki’s currently balanced mind would possibly leaned towards undesirable point. It was Shizuku’s nature that burdened her with hardship wherever she goes.

“Surely, there was also a mess when they were in Ul… but he also gave me this katana-like sword… Seriously, what’s with “sturdy and able to cut anything nicely.” Isn’t it an artifact at a level of a national treasure.”

Talking to herself, Shizuku silently moved her hand onto the Katana hanging on her waist. Walking towards Aiko’s room, Shizuku recalled the time she visited the Kingdom’s smithy for the sake of her katana’s maintenance.

Shizuku called her katana simply as a black katana and shown it to the Kingdom’s best blacksmith. At first, the blacksmith were formal before her as one of “God’s Apostles.” However, his attitude completely changed as soon as he examined the black katana with appraisal magic, and he asked Shizuku while grabbing her shoulders. Thus, as if his previous attitude was just a lie, he barraged her with questions, no he interrogated her with words, such as where did she obtained it and who was the creator.

Although she was dumbfounded, Shizuku somehow managed to regain her calm and asked what happened. The blacksmith said

that even within the Kingdom's treasury, this sword should be more or less at the same as Holy Sword. Although its output and capacity for receiving magic power didn't reach Holy Sword, it's functionality and minute details as a weapon were above Holy Sword.

Next, detailed examination found that if it was supplied with magic power, the blade would be extended by 60 centimeters in form of wind blade. Furthermore, two more blades would form beside the extended part, and they could be fired.

Then, the sheath was examined. It was understood that the sheath would be cladded in thunder if it was supplied with magic power and there was a switch-like part on the sheath's mouth that would shoot needles with tremendous force.

The blade part was made of azanthium so it wouldn't be chipped and there was almost no need to undergo maintenance. The maintenance was only to replenish the needle if it was used.

However, there was a problem, it didn't have magic array to supply it with magic power. It was a natural thing. Hajime was capable of directly manipulating magic power and he was originally never thought of giving it to anyone. So, it wasn't a mistake when he said "sturdy and able to cut things nicely" if it was used by Shizuku.

Those were the only functions installed, and the mysterious black sword (or so the blacksmiths had seen it as) could only be used by manipulating magic power directly, made the Kingdom's blacksmiths burn with fighting spirit.

‘Even though we can’t make a weapon with such minute details and functionality, we will make this sword usable!’ was what they thought. In short, they would somehow make the user’s magic power supply into the sword by any means. Resultantly, after three days and nights, the blacksmiths, with the best one as the core, set aside all of their other works and somehow succeeded in creating the magic array.

As such, Shizuku would be able to pull the black katana’s abilities without using a chant. Afterwards, the blacksmiths whose magic power was dried up were slept for several days with truly happy expressions.

Shizuku was looking in the distance as she recalled the terrific craftsmanship spirit, then she arrived at her destination, Aiko’s room. She knocked, but there was no response. She heard Aiko was going to report to the King and the other officials, so Shizuku thought she must have not return. Leaning against the wall, Shizuku decided to wait for Aiko’s return.

Thirty minutes had passed until Aiko returned. Her footsteps could be heard from the inner corridor which somehow sounded depressed. Aiko was walking without looking ahead, and her serious expression made Shizuku understandd Aiko was desperately thinking about something in her head.

Thus, Aiko didn’t even notice her room with Shizuku right beside its door and passed them. While wondering what had happened, Shizuku called Aiko to stop.

“Sensei… Sensei!”

“Hoeh!?”

Raising a silly voice, her body twitched in surprise. Aiko looked around and finally noticed Shizuku. Afterwards, Aiko sighed in relief seeing Shizuku’s healthy look, then she smiled in joy.

“Yaegashi-san! Long time no see. Have you been healthy? Are you unhurt? Are the others safe?”

Even though she had been depressed up until now, the things she said were only her worries about her students. Towards the unchanging Ai-chan sensei, joy also entered Shizuku’s gaze as she smiled, and sense of security filled her mind. For a while, the two were happy for each other’s safety and their reunion, then they entered Aiko’s room for consultation and exchanging information.

* * *

“So that’s what happened… Shimizu-kun was…”

Shizuku and Aiko were alone in the room, and they mutually exchanged information as they drank the tea inside the tea cups with cute, cat-like legs. Hearing the things happened in Ul, those words were Shizuku’s response.

Inside the room, an awkward mood hung in the air. Aiko

dejectedly drooped her shoulders; she was obviously depressed about Shimizu. Thinking about Aiko's personality and sense of responsibility, Shizuku could not help worry no matter what the circumstance was, but she could not find the words needed to be said.

However, although Shizuku was reluctant to let Aiko continue being depress, so as cheerful as possible, she rejoiced about Aiko's safety.

"I feel bad about Shimizu-kun… however, I truly am glad that Sensei is alive. I really want to thank Nagumo-kun."

Towards the smiling Shizuku, Aiko was reflecting because she once again made her student worry about her, then she returned a smile.

"I see. At our reunion, he didn't have any interest in us and this world… but he came to save Yaegashi-san and the others. Furthermore, he even protected a small child… Fufu, it is possible that some part of the past him had come back. Or should I say he is growing up as he change… he has become reliable."

Saying so as she looked at the far distance, somehow Aiko's cheeks were… slightly dyed in red. Shizuku was confused while thinking, Isn't that a strange reaction for just remembering one of her student? She watched as she Aiko sometimes laughed while reminiscing, "Fufu."

Noticing Shizuku's gaze, Cough!, Aiko cleared her throat. However, she was unable to smooth things over, her cheeks convulsed, and

she gained a bad premonition. Shizuku decided to press on. While half persuading herself that it couldn't be possible, Shizuku said,

"… Sensei? From our talk, Sensei said he saved you from a dangerous situation, can you tell me the details?"

"Eh!?"

"Well, it was said Sensei might have died, so I want to hear how did you recovered from that…"

"A-About that…"

Shizuku recalled the special medicine that quickly healed the near-dead Meld, she thought it must be that, so she played the fool and asked Aiko. Aiko's cheeks began to turn redder than before. Aiko's gaze was swam around and hesitatingly, she muttered her words… it was indeed suspicious.

Like a swordsman she was, Shizuku cut to the case.

"… Sensei. Did something happened between you and… Nagumo-kun?"

" !? Th-There's no way anything happened, you know? J-Just what are you trying to say? It was just the usual me as a teacher and him as a student!"

“Sensei. Please calm down. Your expression had turned strange.”

“!”

Aiko was truly shaken. Frantically, Aiko muttered, “I am a teacher, I am a teacher…” Aiko must have thought she was muttering in her mind, but she wasn’t. Thus, Shizuku was convinced. Although Shizuku didn’t understand in what stage it was, Aiko began to hold a special feeling towards Hajime different from the other students!

“Nagumo-kun! As a person! What did you do to Ai-chan!?”

Already, anyone could see Shizuku’s cheek was convulsing while she was thinking so. Hajime had already became a flag raiser whose level couldn’t even be compared to Kouki. Though unlike Kouki, Hajime wasn’t dense towards affections from others and he had answered to it clearly… and he must had told that to Aiko, too.

Her best friend’s rival appearing in an unexpected place made Shizuku looked at the ceiling with her hand covering her convulsing cheek. Regardless of gender, Shizuku had come to hate that side of Hajime, and a dangerous idea of seriously spreading a painful nickname had crossed her mind… which she managed to give up.

Aiko and Shizuku tried to smooth things over by repeatedly clearing their throats, then they continued their previous

conversation as if nothing had happened.

“Then, Sensei. Did something happen when you reported to the king? After all, it seemed to have been a serious talk.”

Shizuku’s question made Aiko recall something and she made a bitter expression where anger and distrust mixed.

“… Officially, Nagumo-kun is branded as a heretic.”

“!? That’s—!… What do you mean? No, I somehow can guess it… but isn’t that decision a hasty one?”

Hajime was powerful. With only several people, he repulsed more than 60,000 demonic beasts while using mysterious artifacts. Hajime’s comrades also possessed unbelievable power. However, his stance was he would not cooperate with Church of the Saints and would even oppose them depending on the situation. It was true Hajime was a truly dangerous existence for the Kingdom and the Church of the Saints.

However, it was truly too hasty to brand him as a heretic so quickly. The brand of a heretic was given to those who disobeyed the teaching from Church of the Saints and became the God’s enemy, and such branding would make it legal for anyone to subjugate Hajime any time, any where. And according to the situation, even the Temple Knights and Kingdom’s army might move out.

Following that, by attacking Hajime because he was a heretic, they would receive the treatment of an enemy from Hajime, his merciless and severe attack. There was no way the King and Church people didn't know the danger. However, Aiko said they decided it right away. There was no way Shizuku would not be surprised by that.

Shizuku had guessed up until that point, which made Aiko nod in admiration towards the unchanging fast-learner.

"It is completely as Yaegashi-san said. Moreover, no matter if he has tremendous power and not following the church, he ended up saving Ul, but they ignored my protests. Nagumo-kun had expected this situation, so he bolstered by title "Goddess of Bountiful Harvest." Also, I heard from the bodyguards that the name "Goddess of Bountiful Harvest" and "Goddess Sword" had spread further into the other towns. So, by branding him as heretic, it is also means the church is denying "Goddess of Bountiful Harvest" who saved the people. Thus, they shouldn't be able to easily ignore my protest, or so it should be. But those people forced the decision. They were obviously being odd… also, I recalled that other than Ishtal and church's people, the king and other royalties' appearances were strange…"

"… That's troubling. Just what are they thinking… But the thing they couldn't help and think of now is "who" they should send to the powerful Nagumo-kun, right? And that's the point here."

"… It is so. Perhaps…"

"Eeh. There's only us… but I will absolutely refuse that, you know? I don't want to die. If I become Nagumo-kun's enemy… I don't

even want to imagine it.”

Shizuku shivered, and Aiko made a wry smile understanding what Shizuku felt.

Thus, before the Kingdom and Church told Kouki and the others to fight Hajime, Aiko decided to tell them about the things Hajime told her. About the Mad Gods and his purpose during his travels. She held no proof, so she didn’t know whether Kouki and the others would believe it. Furthermore, up until now they did their best because they believed the God would return them to their original world as long as they won the war against Demon race.

In truth, the God takes delight in people’s reaction to His doing, and the possibility of returning is extremely low. So let’s look for the dwelling of those who rebelled against the gods in the old times and look for a way to return ourselves! No one would believe it if those words were said all of a sudden. After Kouki and the others heard what she told them, whether they would see it as nonsense and continued to fight like before, or believed her and looked for another way… That was not something Aiko could predict. However, she must nail it to them not to blindly believing the Church. Aiko convinced herself to do that now.

“Yaegashi-san. Nagumo-kun knows his information is an unbelievable one and will be antagonized by Amanokawa and the others, so he said this only to me.”

“Information… is it?”

“Yes. It is about the God worshipped by the church and the objective of Nagumo and the girls’ travel. He didn’t give any proof about it… but it is a truly important information, so tonight… no, this evening, I want to tell this to everyone.”

“That’s… no, I understand. Then, should I call everyone now?”

“No, it is an information I don’t want to be known by the church’s side, so I want to tell it at a time when everyone has gathered naturally; at dinner. And we should be able to talk among ourselves if I said I want to spend time with the students I haven’t seen for a long time without any outsiders.”

“Indeed… I understood. Then, at dinner it is.”

Afterwards, a good amount of time had passed while Shizuku and Aiko chatted. However, they couldn’t have known that the promise for the dinner could not come to pass…

* * *

The time was evening.

While the sun was setting, it gave a parting gift of vivid orange color, and Aiko was walking along the empty corridor. The evening sunlight entered the corridor from the windows and drew an obvious contrast on the wall and floor at the other sides.

Aiko went towards the dining room while her gaze was captivated by the evening sun, but she immediately stopped after she felt someone's presence. When she looked forward, she saw a woman-like figure inside the shadow. The woman walked in the middle of the corridor, and gracefully stopped her feet with a straight stature. Her clothing was the nun's habit of Church of the Saints.

The woman was beautiful, however she spoke to Aiko with a somewhat mechanical and cold voice.

"Nice to meet you, Hatayama Aiko. I've come for you."

Aiko felt a chill ran down her spine when she heard her voice, but she feigned her calmness as to not become impolite to someone she met for the first time.

"Umm, nice to meet you, too. Coming for me… you mean the dinner with the students?"

"No, your destination is the main church."

"Eh?"

The sentence which didn't give her a chance to answer, made Aiko inadvertently ask her again. At that time, the woman moved out from the shadow into a place lighted by the evening sun. Seeing

the woman, Aiko held her breath. Even Aiko, who was the same gender as her, was instinctively charmed by the woman's beauty.

Her silver hair was sparkling while it was being reflected by the evening sunlight. With big, long and narrow blue eyes, and her mysterious and wonderful features that seemed to be both of an adult woman and a young girl; all of her parts were perfectly positioned. Her height was tall for a woman, around 170 centimeters, which forced Aiko to look up at her. Her white skin was as smooth as a white porcelain, her hands and feets were slender. Her breasts neither big nor small, it was a truly exquisite size if one was thinking about the balance of her entirety.

However, she was regrettably had no expression. Rather than expressionless, it was as if she wore a Noh mask. No one would doubt if it was said she was a statue — the best masterpiece by a famous sculptor. The woman possessed an inhumanely artistic beauty.

Towards Aiko, who held her breath, the woman smiled and indifferently continued her words.

"We feel the thing you are going to tell them will inconvenient us. After all, what your students will be doing now looks "interesting" to us. That's why, until the time come, you will temporarily leave the stage."

"Wh-What are you…"

The beautiful nun slowly approached Aiko without even making a

footstep, and Aiko instinctively backed. Then, Aiko saw the nun's blue eyes shone. Aiko felt her mind grow hazy. Immediately, she concentrated as though she was going to invoke magic, and her haziness dispersed in a snap.

"… I see. As expected, I can only disregard that you are calling yourself a "God." For you are capable of resisting my "charm". There's no other way. I will just take you by force."

"D-Don't come! Wh-What I want—… ugh!?"

The pressure from the woman's true character made Aiko immediately tried to activate her magic. However, faster than her finishing the chant, the nun momentarily shortened their distance and drove her fist into Aiko's stomach. Aiko collapsed, and at the time she felt her consciousness about to be swallowed by darkness, she heard the nun's mutter.

"Don't worry. I won't kill you. You are an excellent piece, and you might be useful against that irregular."

The white-haired, eye-patched boy floated inside Aiko's mind. Following that, while knowing it wouldn't reach him, she shouted his name in her mind right before her consciousness completely disappeared.

———— Nagumo-kun!

* * *

“?”

The nun easily shouldered Aiko as though she was weightless, then she looked around the corridor as if she had sensed someone. For a while, the nun silently searched for something. Then, she slowly opened the guest room’s door along the corridor.

Following that, she entered the room, looked around, approached the closet without any sound of a footstep, and she forcefully opened the door. However, there was nothing inside, so the nun tilted her head and looked around once again, looking here and there. Before long, after not finding anything, she shouldered Aiko again and went outside of the room.

With silence returning into the room, a trembling murmur could be heard.

“… I must tell this… someone—”

No one was inside the room. However, retreating footsteps could be heard, and before long, the room completely regained its silence.

Arifureta: Volume 9 Chapter 3

Chapter 83 of the Web Novel.

Immediate Trouble in the Great Desert

A brown world.

«Guryuu-en Great Desert» was a place those words expressed, perfectly. The sand was brown, formed by millions of miniscule grains. The wind that was blowing constantly threw up the sand and dyed the air brown, and in a 360 degree radius, there was only one color as far as one's eye could reach.

Moreover, there were numerous sand dunes, big and small, whose surfaces were always stirred by the wind. Moment by moment, the surface's pattern of the dune was constantly changing, as if expressing "I am alive." The blazing sun and its unreserved heat made the temperature of the sand on the ground shoot up quickly. It easily exceeded 40 degrees celsius. Coupled with the fluttering sand, it was the worst environment to travel in.

However, it was only for "ordinary" travelers.

Currently, inside such a severe environment, a black, box-shaped vehicle, a magic-driven four-wheeler in fact, was advancing casually while raising a dust storm. Though there was neither road or pathway, it was solved by the compass installed inside the vehicle.

“… The outside is amazing… I am really glad that this is not a normal carriage.”

“This one agrees. This one doth not know how it became such an environment… but indeed it isn’t a place this one wants to be actively moving in.”

Sitting on the rear seat while watching the sand battering the window and observing the brown-colored world, Shia and Tio muttered so, wholeheartedly. No matter how much of an M Tio was, this environment only depressed her.

“It’s completely different from when Myuu came here before! Here’s very cool, and Myuu’s eyes aren’t hurting! Papa is amazing!”

“That’s right~. Hajime-papa is amazing, right~. Myuu-chan, do you want to drink cold water?”

“Want to~. Kaori-oneechan, thank you~.”

Sitting on the lap of Kaori, who was seated on the window side of the front seat, Myuu was excited because it was different from the time that she was here when she was kidnapped before. Myuu was looking at Hajime, who created such a comfortable space, with sparkling eyes.

That was natural. It would have been terribly severe for Myuu, who was a member of sea-dweller tribe, to cross the desert. For a young child around four years old like her, it would not be strange for her to have died due in her weakened state. Having endured such an environment made Myuu's surprise further increase at the gap between that time and now. After all, this four-wheeler was equipped with air conditioning.

Following that, the one who agreed with Myuu, took out cold water which normally didn't exist in the desert even if one hoped with all their might, was the one who made an impactful confession to Hajime and declaration of war to Yue in Hol-ad, and, before he knew it, she had become one of his companions. She was Kaori. Incidentally, the water was taken out of the refrigerator installed in the car.

"You know, Shirasa-… Kaori. Please stop saying Hajime-papa. It is somehow made me felt terribly itchy over here."

"? But, isn't Myuu said that as if it was the norm?"

"Well, I don't mind Myuu. However, for a classmate to call me papa is really…"

Due to her personality which liked to look after others, Kaori somehow became the one who took care of Myuu and she mostly called Hajime as Hajime-papa when she was by Myuu's side. And for a classmate, and a girl at that, to call him papa, Hajime felt a different sense of resistance from when Myuu called him that, and he wore a truly subtle expression.

Incidentally, for Hajime to call her as “Kaori” was a result of her petition. Her reason was, Hajime-kun calls everyone by their own given name, so it is unfair for me to be called by my family name!, something like that.

“Is that so? Then I won’t… but, someday when I also have a child… at that time…”

Kaori said so with her cheeks dyed crimson, while sneaking a peek at Hajime. Thus a strange atmosphere wrapped everyone inside the vehicle, except for Myuu. Then Yue answered Kaori in place of Hajime who pretended not to hear anything.

“…Unfortunately, I have made that appointment already. Hajime promised it to me.”

“!? … Hajime-kun, what does she mean?”

“… I don’t think it is something that strange. After all, it is something still in the far future.”

“… fufu, Hajime already promised to introduce me to his parents.”

” !?”

“…He’s thoroughly made a bright family plan.”

” !?”

“…Even the dates in Hajime’s hometown.”

” !?”

Yue’s vigorous attacks couldn’t be stopped! Those words, one by one, became stakes, driven into Kaori’s chest. However, Kaori wasn’t a woman that would be done so easily. She believed in Hajime’s survival even in such a despairing situation and she held the courage to challenge Yue, who obviously owned a special bond with Hajime. In the moment Yue’s words were stopped, she began her counterattack!

“I, I know a lot of things about Hajime-kun that Yue doesn’t know! For example, Hajime’s dream for the future, his hobbies, even his favorite genre! Does Yue know the anime and manga that Hajime-kun likes?”

“Hmph… that’s… but, those aren’t related to the current us. There are no such things here. Hajime can just teach me once we arrive in Japan…”

“How naive. Just look at the current Hajime-kun. Doesn’t he looked like an anime character?”

“Geh!?”

It should’ve been a fight between Kaori and Yue but somehow Hajime received the damage.

“White-haired with an eyepatch, moreover his magic eyes… those are certainly the things Hajime-kun’s favorite characters have… even his weapon, that Cross Bit is modeled from funnel… ah, but the one Hajime-kun likes is 00, so is it GN Bit? Whatever it is, the current Hajime-kun is still quite the otaku.”

“GAH!? K-Kaori…”

“Mu, muu… for Hajime’s weapon to be derived from that.”

“Yue, can you say it is your victory if you don’t know the things the one you love likes?”

“… Kaori… that’s some courage… then, let me teach you myself. About the things that Hajime likes on…the bed.”

” !? … W-, w-, w-, on bed, uu~, as I thought…”

“Fufufu… it is good that you now know the difference between us.”

During their travel, Yue and Kaori had already made so many sparks against each other that the other party members already came to ignore them. In the beginning, Shia watched them anxiously, but in the end, it didn't become a serious problem, so she stopped getting herself involved with them.

In a way, it was Hajime who received most of the damage. Hajime was the source of the two's quarrel, so the content of their fights made him want to writhe. Even now, he received mental damage because the things he worried about the most were being pointed at.

Now Yue boldly told them about the "night" activities which made Kaori close her ears, not wanting to hear it. Hajime himself didn't want Myuu to be exposed to that, so he tried to stop Yue.

However, faster than Hajime, Myuu unexpectedly came to stop the two's quarrel.

"… u~, Yue-oneechan and Kaori-oneechan always quarrelling! Myuu hates it if big sisters don't get along!"

Saying so, Myuu moved from Kaori's laps towards Shia's lap in the back seat. Moreover, Yue and Kaori became flustered. It was because the four year-old girl said she would hate them.

"Geez, you two are unbecoming in front of Myuu-chan. Rather, that was bad for her education. I also understand how much you two think of Hajime-san, but please be more prudent."

“! …What a failure. To be scolded by Shia…”

“I-I am sorry, Myuu-chan, Shia.”

To be admonished by Shia made the two droop their shoulders.

For Yue, Shia was akin to a friend and younger sister, and although Shia also held affection towards Hajime, Shia also thought similarly towards Yue which made Yue didn’t think of her as a love rival. As for Tio, she was just a pervert. That’s why, Kaori, who made a full-frontal declaration of war towards Yue, was the first love rival she ever had.

Yue was convinced that there was an absolute bond between her and Hajime. She held an unwavering confidence that she was Hajime’s “special person.” That’s why she was confident that she would be able to easily defeat the challenger, Kaori, when the confession and declaration of war happened.

However, although her confidence didn’t change, Kaori sometimes made the flowers bloom between her and Hajime when they were reminiscencing about Japan, which was unknown to Yue and the others. Towards Kaori, who knew the past Hajime that she didn’t know of, Yue’s sense of rivalry budded before long.

As a result, just like children boasting about their collections, their quarrel turned from a serious one into such a situation and today, Myuu and Shia finally got angry at them.

Normally, Hajime was the one who should be stopping Yue, but he was the one who received most of the damage from the two' quarrels. And now, he could only look far into the distance, as if it didn't have anything to do with him, to heal his wounded heart.

"Nn? What is that? Master, there seems to be a commotion in the direction at three o'clock."

Yue and Kaori were desperately appealing that they were getting along to mend Myuu's mood and Shia was also calming Myuu with a wry smile. Hajime muttered, "I am not a chuuni" with hollow eyes. While those happened, unexpectedly, Tio who watched them in interest called out to Hajime. She seemed to have discovered something outside the window.

Hajime looked towards the place Tio mentioned, a big dune at his right. There, numerous worm-like demonic beasts, sandworms to be precise, had gathered. Their numerous heads could be seen at the top of the dune.

Those sandworms were 20 meters on average, large-scale demonic beasts while the largest ones were around 100 meters in length. They lived in this «Guryuu-en Great Desert» and would usually submerge themselves underground and attack prey in their vicinity by opening their big, fangs filled mouths from below. They specialized in surprise attacks due to being hard to detect and were feared by people who crossed the large desert as the gods of death.

Fortunately, the sandworms themselves weren't very perceptive, so as long as one wasn't so unfortunate as to come near them by

accident, they would neither notice nor aim at anyone who was far away. As such, it could be said that there was someone who was not that fortunate at that dune, but…

“? Why are they just squirming around?”

That’s right, Tio would have not made a doubtful face and asked Hajime if there were just sandworms appearing. With Hajime’s perception skills, he would have noticed any of the sandworms’ surprise attacks, and they’d be able to get out of the sandworm’s range with four-wheeler’s speed. What was abnormal was that if the sandworms were attacking someone, rather than attacking, the sandworms were squirming around in their surroundings.

“It’s as if, they art confused as to eat or not, right?”

“Well, from what I see, isn’t that so?”

“This one hath no knowledge of this place. But those art all-eaters, they shouldn’t be hesitating to eat anything…”

Although Tio was a masochist pervert, she had lived far longer than Yue and unlike the imprisoned Yue, her knowledge was pretty vast. That was why she owned reliable information about demonic beasts. For her to be looking doubtful must mean that something extraordinary is happening.

However, they didn’t have any reason to be involved with it.

Hajime decided to get as far away as possible without confirming or getting involved in it.

And at that time,

“Kh!? Everyone, brace yourselves!”

Hajime shouted so and immediately accelerated the four-wheeler. Morrow, from behind the four-wheeler, starting with a small part of its body surfacing, a gigantic figure with the same color as the desert jumped out. With its mouth open, it was a sandworm. Apparently, Hajime’s party were also unfortunate ones.

Hajime further steered to the left and right, advancing through the sand at high speed. Under the four-wheeler that drew an “S” letter, a second and third sandworm jumped out.

“Kyaaaa!”

“Hiu!”

“Wawawa!”

In order of screams, there was Kaori, Myuu, and Shia. Met with a strong centrifugal force, Kaori turned behind, worrying about Myuu in the back seat. But her balance crumbled and she fell into Hajime’s lap with her hip on Yue’s lap.

Blinking her eyes, Kaori's cheeks were flushed, and as she was, she clung tightly to Hajime's waist. Her position was actually pretty bad. It made Hajime's cheek cramp. Incidentally, the other half of Kaori's body was crushing on Yue.

"Oi, Shira-… Kaori! What are you doing in such a situation!"

"It's a dangerous! A dangerous situation! So, I'm just clinging to Hajime-kun!"

"…Damn you, Kaori. To pin me under, is it… a surprise attack?"

While receiving an ambush from the sandworms, Kaori used this chance to hug Hajime. Yue was slapping Kaori's butt even now, but the blushing Kaori was still clinging to Hajime's waist, not moving at all.

While they were like that, the three appearing sandworms, with their upper bodies out of the ground, were glaring at the four-wheeler that evaded all of their ambushes. This time, those gigantic figures came forward to attack from overhead.

If it was a normal carriage, everything would've ended with that attack. However, it was an artifact created with a portion of Hajime's otaku soul. It wasn't even daunted at being made out as prey.

Besides…

“Ah, this is the first time I am using THIS!”

Saying so, Hajime turned around the four-wheeler with a drift, advancing backwards, he poured his magic and activated the installed function.

CLANK! KA-THUNK! KA-THUNK!

At the same time the mechanical sound effect rang out, a part of the four-wheeler’s bonnet slided open and an arm with a set of four rockets came out. The arm moved as if looking for its’ prey and when it turned towards the incoming sandworms, wooosh!, such an sfx rang out accompanied by the deadly warheads scattering their sparks.

Shining in an orange color, the rockets entered right into the sandworms’ opened mouths and after a moment, they created great explosions as they destroyed the sandworms from the inside. The sandworms’ crimson blood and flesh poured down like a shower and some stuck on the windshield of the currently back running four-wheeler.

“Uhee… Shia, don’t let Myuu see it.”

“I did that already～. Anh! Myuu-chan, was it painful? But please hold on for a while.”

Hajime asked Shia to do so at the time the rockets were fired into the incoming sandworms because the stimulation might be too strong for Myuu. Like that, in synchronization with Hajime, Shia was already embracing Myuu closely to her chest so as she would not see it. However, maybe because she could not breath from her face being buried in Shia's breasts, Myuu tried to sip out and inadvertently touched a part of Shia's body. Inadvertently, Shia moaned. Hajime decided that he did not hear anything.

Currently, although Kaori was clinging onto Hajime's waist, Yue was finally able to fix her seatbelt. Indeed it was not a situation where he could be defeated by his own impulse, even though his ears were dyed in red with his face cramped.

"E-Excuse me, Hajime-kun. I am sorry. That, that I impulsively… there's no perverted meaning to it. That is, for a bit, I just wanted to hug…"

"… then if things go well, are you going to satisfy Hajime like that?"

"Un, that is so… wait, no! Yue, don't put such strange things into my mouth. I am not as lewd as Yue."

"…You said I am lewd… certainly, I can't refute that when I am alone with Hajime."

"…Girls, please shut it already. Also, Yue, please don't talk about

night activities because it's embarrassing."

With the three sandworms crushed by the rockets installed in the four-wheeler, Hajime sharpened his gaze because the sandworms on the dune before could be seen moving due to perceiving the explosive sound and impact.

However, on his side, Kaori and Yue were conversing just as usual which reduced his tension. Inadvertently, he admonished them due to him being embarrassed.

To begin with, in his mind, the "night" Yue was certainly a lewd one and, when he was alone with her, he thought of her as pretty erotic. Kaori who seemed to have seen through him was teary eyed. Yue, with a bewitching smile, was looking at Hajime while licking her lip. Kaori, who saw that, raised a cute groan. Unconsciously, her fighting spirit blazed further.

From the back seat, Shia said, "I understand your feelings, Kaori-san. We are comrades here," while patting Kaori's shoulder with sympathetic eyes.

Hajime ignored them and the moved four-wheeler above another dune. He could see the group of sandworms on the lower side of the ground with their lower parts still underground. They didn't hide anything as they slightly raised the sand. They might have guessed that they had been noticed by Hajime's party, so they chose speed over another surprise attack.

Hajime put the rocket launcher away and activated another piece

of weaponry in its stead. The center of the bonnet slid apart and a rectangular machine appeared from inside. Following that, the rectangular box extended its barrel with kashun! sound effect, and it became a rifle was similar to Schlagen.

Next, bright red sparks gushed out from the four-wheeler's Schlagen. With its arm adjusting the angle, DUuuoo!!, came a roaring, firing sound as a line flashing line tore through the brown world.

The bullet, which was fired at a high-velocity, advanced as it raised the sand on the ground upon impact and grandly raised a dust storm. On the sand column that was raised just like an eruption was, of course, a lot of sand colored meat and red blood.

The Schlagen installed on four-wheeler continued to fire bright red flashes, one after another. The sandworms that were hunting their prey exploded on the ground and became small bits of nourishment for the barren ground.

"Hajime-kun! Look at that!"

"…A white person?"

When four-wheeler's Schlagen, which was trailing white smoke, was stored back, Kaori let out a surprised voice and pointed her finger. In the place Kaori pointed at, just as Yue muttered, was a collapsed person who was wrapped in white clothing. It was probably the one the previous sandworms were looking at. However, from their distance, it was unknown as to why it wasn't

eaten.

“Please, Hajime-kun. Let’s go there… I am a “healer” after all.”

Kaori looked at Hajime, petitioning. Even Hajime was interested as to why that person was not attacked by the demonic beasts of the desert in such a situation, so he accepted Kaori’s request. It was possible that the person carried a method or item capable of keeping demonic beasts away. And in actuality, there was a mineral called the Faeadren crystal that carried such an effect in the sea of trees. The crystal only made it difficult for demonic beasts to approach, but there’s a possibility that even stronger items exist.

As such, the four-wheeler came near the collapsed person. The person wore clothing that was similar to galabeya (egyptian clothing), and it wore a hood that was large enough to hide its’ face. Its’ face couldn’t be seen. Falling prone, the hood hid it.

Getting off the four-wheeler, Kaori ran with short steps towards the fallen person.

“!… This is…”

When the hood was taken off, a man’s face could be seen, a young one that was still in the middle of his 20s. However, what surprised Kaori was not that but the young man’s state. With a pained expression, he was drenched in sweat, his breathing was rough, and his pulse was fast. He generated an intense heat from all over his body that could be felt even through his clothing. Moreover,

blood vessels could be seen as if they were being pressed from the inside of his body, and he was bleeding from his eyes and nose. It was obviously an abnormal situation. It was neither a sun stroke nor cold.

Hajime became cautious towards the virus-carrier like young man, but he decided to keep quiet and watch as the healing specialist was examining him. Kaori activated “Infiltrate and Examine.” Using magic power to infiltrate the other’s body, she could examine one’s state and the result could be seen on her status plate.

With one hand placed on the young man’s chest, Kaori’s other hand was holding her status plate where the result of the examination was displayed. The result was…

“…Rampaging magic power? Does it mean the magic power inside his body is out of control because of poison?”

“Kaori? Do you understood anything now?”

“Y-Yeah, but this is…”

Saying so, Kaori shown what was displayed on her status plate,

Condition	Excessive release of magic power, unable to release it outside.
Symptom	Severe hazy consciousness, pain in whole body, rupturing of blood vessels and hemorrhage
Cause	Abnormality in bodily fluid.

“It is just my guess, but he must have drunk something which resulted in his magic power going out of control… moreover, because he can’t release it outside, his magic power was pressuring from inside his body and his body couldn’t endure it… if this keeps up, his internal organs and blood vessels will explode. It is also possible that he will be weakened to death due to a large amount of hemorrhaging… I am requesting a blessing unto this location, “Ten Thousand Heavens.”

Concluding so, Kaori chanted her healing magic. “Ten Thousand Heavens” was what she activated. It was onne of the middle-ranked healing magics with the effect of curing abnormal conditions. It was the magic used to undo Suzu’s petrification.

However…

“…There’s almost no change… why? For it to be incapable of curing it… does it means too much time has passed?”

Apparently, “Ten Thousand Heavens” could not cure the man, it could only delay the progression. Next, maybe because of the pressure from inside his body, the young man groaned in pain. His bleeding didn’t stop. At the moment, because she didn’t have any clear treatment method, Kaori ground her teeth and decided to use her emergency measure.

“Here I declared the light of grace, here is my realm, my sanctuary, which crushes all evils just as I intended to, “Holy Ground.””

High-ranked light attributed healing magic, “Holy Ground.” It was a magic that transfers peoples’ magic power to the others within the area. Basically, by transferring one’s magic power to one’s companion, that person would temporarily escaped from magic power exhaustion. It was a magic that aimed to supplement another if s/he didn’t have a sufficient amount of magic power to shoot a strong magic.

Moreover, it wasn’t limited to the user’s magic power, so it could forcefully transfer someone else’s magic power to another within the area. It held the same principle as magic drain. However, it needed a lot more time to extract the magic power from another person and it was impossible to extract a lot of it at once. This was the reason it is only a “High-ranked magic.”

To begin with, it only became practical because Kaori was capable of activating magic which originally needed ten notes with only three notes of chanting. It showed how capable Kaori was.

The reason she used this magic on the suffering young man was of course to release the rampaging magic power that was building pressure inside his body towards the outside. It was displayed on the status plate that the young man was in state where he “cannot release magic power to outside of the body,” so she decided to try “if” it could be solved by forcefully draining it using high-ranked magic.

The pure-white light expanded from the center of the young man’s body, and firefly-like, fleeting lights sprang about. It was a mysterious sight. With her eyes shut, the appearance of Kaori, who placed her hand on the young man’s chest as she concentrated and was wrapped by the fleeting light, was divine.

Kaori, who easily activated high-ranked magic, made the ones well versed in magic, Yue and Tio, inadvertently leak “Hou…,” voices of admiration. While being held by Shia, Myuu watched Kaori in an entranced expression and muttered, “Beautiful…”

Without noticing that her new comrades in the surroundings were raising voices of admiration, Kaori put the magic power extracted from the young man into the bracelet made of God Crystal that she received from Hajime. Apparently, the forced drain from the high-ranked magic was effective.

Incidentally, the reason it was not a ring was because Hajime didn’t want to repeat the past misunderstanding.

Gradually, the young man’s breathing became steady. The redness of his body also disappeared as it seemed the bleeding was also stopped. After deactivating “Holy Ground,” Kaori activate beginner-ranked healing magic, “Blessing,” which healed the young man’s blood vessels.

“For the time being… I don’t think it will have an immediate effect as I don’t see any real solution for it. There’s also the possibility of a slow death from over magic power extraction, so I only extracted it until the level where the pressure inside his body is decreased. If this keeps up, I think the possibility of a slow death from either pressure from inside his body or fatigue is… high. I also have no memory of such a symptom from the things I studied… Do Yue and Tio know anything about it?”

With the young man out of the crisis, Kaori was somewhat relieved

but anxious as she could not heal him completely. Thus she asked Yue and Tio whose knowledge was deep. The two's gazes wandered around as they searched about it inside their memory, but there was none. In the end, it became a situation where they could not even say that it was a disease of an unknown cause.

"Kaori, just to be safe, try to examine us too. After all, there's also the possibility that it is an unknown disease that is spread by aerial infection too. Well, there's no need to worry about it if it is just a rampaging of magic power."

"Un, you are right."

Nodding at Hajime's words, Kaori examined everyone and didn't find any abnormalities. Therefore, because it seemed not to infect anyone from respiration, Hajime's party patted their chests in relief.

When they did that, the young man raised a groan and his eyelids trembled. Thus, he woke up. Slowly opening his eyes and then looking at his surrounding, the young man saw the nearby Kaori was watching him in worry and he said, "Goddess? I see, so this that world…"

Following that, the young man began to heat up for different reason and tried to reach out towards Kaori only to have his stomach trampled by Hajime, who didn't conceal his irritation from the already annoying heat and sand.

"Ufffph!?"

“H-Hajime-kun!?”

Leering at the groaning young man, whose body bent into <, and Kaori, who raised a surprised voice, Hajime began to question him.

Hajime knew that the garaveya-like clothing and overcoat worn by the young man was a specialty of the «Dukedom of Ancadi» that was located in the biggest oasis of «Guryuu-en Great Desert». He studied it as way of escaping reality at the time he was called “incompetent.” If the young man says that a kind of disease was spreading in Ancadi then they would change their next destination due to the current one being a danger zone. Thus he asked the young man.

Regaining his senses after being trampled by Hajime, the young man didn’t even look at Hajime’s party surrounding him and stared at the black object, blinking in confusion. After hearing the rough circumstances from Kaori,and understanding that Hajime’s party were his life benefactors, he bowed his head, said his thanks, and began his story.

Hearing the young man’s story, is it those Gods playing tricks on us?, Hajime was looking at the sky doubtfully because trouble always followed them wherever they went.

Arifureta: Volume 9 Chapter 4

Chapter 84 of the Web Novel.

Dukedom of Ancadi

Because of his peculiar condition before, the young man, though he regained consciousness, could not stand straight. Furthermore, because of the danger of dehydration due to the desert's temperature and his considerably sweating, the young man was invited into the vehicle and allowed to drink some water inside.

The young man was forced to acknowledge that the four-wheeler was some sort of carriage, and he feels giddiness from the comfortability inside it. However, when he recalled that he could not finish his mission if he stopped mid-way, he pulled himself together as there was no time to enjoy such luxury. Then, he introduced himself to Hajime's party who saved him.

"First, let me say my appreciation for your help. Thank you very much. When I thought I was going to die in this state… Ancadi would be finished. My name is Viz Fuad Zengain. Son of the Dukedom of Ancadi's ruler, Randzi Fuad Zengain."

Surprisingly, the young man called Viz was an important person. Ancadi itself is the key point in transporting marine products so the freshness would not drop by much from Elisen, where 80% of marine products were produced in that northern part of the continent. In other words, by being the main supplier of the food from the northern part of the continent, Ancadi held the monopoly. Ancadi's ruler himself was not only a distinguished noble but a

great noble who was trusted by Herrlicht Kingdom.

Hearing Kaori's identity of being one of the "God's Apostle" and someone summoned from different world, as well as how Hajime's party was made up of Gold-ranked adventurers, Viz was so astonished that his eyes popped out. Thus, he thought, Is this a command from God!? Even a Goddess is sent to us!, and he suddenly prayed to the heavens. In this case, the Goddess, Kaori, was dumbfounded by him. Hajime urged him to tell them the situation while leaking a slight Pressure, making Viz clear his throat and begin to talk while drenched in cold sweat.

What Viz told them was,

Four days ago, people collapsing with a high fever of an unknown cause began appearing one after another in Ancadi. It was really a sudden, with 3,000 people out of 270,000 falling unconscious in the first day, and those with similar symptoms reached 20,000 people. The medical center filled instantly, and it continued to fill up the communal center. The medical personnels were treating the patients while looking for the cause of the disease, but, just like Kaori, they could only delay it without curing any.

While it happened, the number of patients kept increasing one after another. Before long, infected medical personnels began to appear. The number overwhelmed the magic users capable of delaying the disease, and under such chaos, dead finally appeared among those who didn't receive the treatment. Despair shrouded the people due to the fact that people died only after the second day they were infected.

Within those, one pharmacist accidentally used "Liquid Judging"

on the drinking water. Resultantly, it was known that the water contained poison, which resulted in rampaging of magic power. At once, survey team was formed. They examined Ancadi's oasis while assuming the worst situation in their mind, and as they thought, the oasis had been polluted.

Naturally, the oasis is a lifeline for a country located in the middle of the desert, so the guarding and maintenance were strictly managed by the one in charge. Thinking about it normally, it was not an exaggeration that it was impossible to take out the guards of Ancadi and poisoned the oasis even with all prepared measures.

From where, how, who… The survey team could only tilted their heads, but more importantly, because the stock of water from two days ago were not plenty, they didn't have any more water to use. Thus, it resulted with them having no other ways to save those infected from drinking the polluted water.

However, it wasn't like there wasn't any other method — there was a method to heal those infected. The method needed a mineral called "Serene Stone." This "Serene Stone" is a special mineral hat carried an effect to calm the magic power's activity and a small amount of this valuable mineral could be harvested in the northern rock zone near «Guryuu-en Great Volcano». If the "Serene Stone" was made into powder and drunk, it would be able to calm the rampaging magic power inside the bodies of the infected.

Even so, the northern rock zone was too far that it needed at least one month of travel using carriage. Moreover, Ancadi's adventurers, especially those capable of entering «Guryuu-en Great Volcano»'s dungeon, harvesting "Serene Stone," and returning, had already fallen to the disease. Half-assed adventurers could not even able to go through the desert storm wrapping «Guryuu-en Great

Volcano». Besides, even if there were people with power to do so, they also did not have any stock of water safe to use, so it was necessary to ask for help from the Kingdom.

The requested help asked for water that could temporarily relieved 270,000 people in the Dukedom of Ancadi, in addition to powerful people capable of going to the dungeon of «Guryuu-en Great Volcano». However, it was not easy to arrange powerful people capable of doing that. Even though the request from the Dukedom could not be disregarded, the Kingdom would rather choose to investigate Ancadi's current condition first. Furthermore, the Kingdom would also deliberately make the procedures as a slow one.

That's why, Zengain, the one in power, thought it was necessary for Viz to be the representative and directly asking for reinforcement.

"Father, mother, and my little sister were infected, too, and although they managed to recover using the stock of Serene Stone in Ancadi, they were in a truly weakened state that they are incapable of going to the nearby city much less to the Kingdom. That's why I am the one to ask for the help and left Ancadi yesterday along with bodyguards. At that time, I didn't have any symptom… but I might have been infected. The appearance of the disease likely differs depending on the individual. I was agitated by this situation… my family falling sick, the duchy fell into disorder, and how we were argued on who was to immediately ask for rescue. It is also necessary to procure Serene Stone. And even right now, the lives of Ancadi's people are perishing… but I am in such a miserable condition!"

Even though he could not put strength into his body, Viz put

strength into his fist and hit his thigh. He seemed to have a strong sense of responsibility towards the people as the next Lord of Ancadi. He might also be mortified by how his bodyguards were annihilated when the Sandworms attacked.

However, it was fortunately the Sandworms hesitated to eat him due to sensing the disease. Though he was exhausted due to the disease, it was also what caused the Sandworms not to attack him and resultantly, he met Hajime's party. Life is where one is unable to know what would happen next.

"… I want you, no, I request you as the formal representative of the Lord of Ancadi Dukedom. Please lend me your strength."

Saying so, Viz bowed his head. Silence filled the vehicle for a while. The sound of sand carried by the wind and hitting the windows greatly resounded. Viz himself knew that as the Lord's representative, he should not easily bow his head to someone else, but he was so desperate not to let go of such good fortune.

All gazes moved to Hajime. Though they left the decision to Hajime, everyone's gazes, except Yue and Tio's, were obviously telling him they wanted to help. Especially Kaori; she could not disregard such a situation as a "Healer." Her gaze was petitioning him. However, Myuu was more direct.

"Papa~. Won't Papa help him?"

She said while looking at him with a truly pure gaze. She seemed to believe Hajime could solve whatever the problem was,

unconditionally. For Myuu, Hajime was her one and only hero. Towards Myuu, and Kaori's expectant gaze, "It can't be helped," Hajime shrugged his shoulders with wry feeling.

"Fufu," Shia and Tio chuckled at Hajime. Hajime immediately looked over his shoulder towards Yue, and Yue was… just the same as always. No matter what Hajime's decision was, she will lend him all of her might. Even without words, Yue's feelings were clearly transmitted to him. Hajime stroked Yue's cheek, and Viz his agreement to undertake the request.

To begin with, he had planned to go to «Guryuu-en Great Volcano», and he thought of entrusting Myuu to Ancadi at that time. After all, it wasn't right to bring along a four year old child into a Great Dungeon. As such, they didn't have any problem of procuring "Serene Stone" while conquering the dungeon, and there was no danger for Myuu, a child from demi-human race, since the source of the rampaging magic power disease was known. In the end, it was a problem Hajime could solve while completing his own agenda.

"With Hajime-dono's class being "Gold," I wanted you to gather "Serene Stone" from the Great Volcano first, but it is necessary to go to Imperial Capital first to secure our water. Can this movement type artifact be used by someone else other than Hajime-dono?"

"Well, except Kaori and Myuu, everyone can use it, but… there's no need to go all the way to the Imperial Capital. I will somehow secure the water, so I want to go to Ancadi first, what do you think?"

"Hajime-dono can somehow secure it? What does it mean?"

The words that Hajime was capable of securing the water for several hundred thousand people made Viz dubious, and it was natural to doubt it. However, even without transporting it, Hajime had a method to obtain water. It was to collect the moisture in the atmosphere using water element magic.

Of course it might be impossible for an ordinary magic-user, but by his side was the rare magic genius, Yue. Moreover, Yue had many means of instantly recovering her magic power. Also, Viz or Randzi would still have enough time to go to the Kingdom to ask for help again if they regained their physical condition and took the remaining Serene Stone in Ancadi along.

After briefly explained those, Viz could not believe it at first. After all the chance was so small for him to make it into the Kingdom in his current condition, but he agreed to return to Ancadi after being persuaded by Kaori, a “God’s Apostle.”

While being surprised once again from how four-wheeler moved in high-speed as if it was sliding in the desert, Viz wondered why a “God’s Apostle” like Kaori was alone accompanied by the adventurers, why a child of Sea-dweller tribe called Hajime, a human, Papa, why they got along with someone from Rabbitman tribe, why a black-haired blooming woman made a disgusting smile though she being abused, but his chest was heated by the hope that came into his view.

* * *

Within the fluttering brown sand, the Ancadi they arrived at, just

like Neutral Commercial City of Fhuren, was surrounded by wall and a milk-white one in this case. The outer wall and buildings were milky white in color, which created a beautiful contrast with the brown-colored outside world.

However, what differed from Fhuren were the pillars of light coming from the enclosing, irregular-shaped wall, which climbed towards the heavens. The pillars of light joined together in the sky, forming a gigantic dome, covering the entirety of Ancadi. At times, it was as if the surface of water had something thrown into it; ripples were appearing, creating a mysterious and beautiful spectacle.

Apparently, this dome was preventing sand from entering the city. And although large sand storm sometimes appearing in time of full moon, the dome made none of the sand entered Ancadi and it was only looked like a cloudy weather from inside.

Hajime's party entered Ancadi from the shining, huge gate. Even a magic barrier was erected on the gate to not let sand entered. The gate guards, though surprised by seeing magic-driven four-wheeler, they didn't have energy to question it because of the gloomy atmosphere surrounding Ancadi; they seemed to have given up. However, when they noticed the next Lord sitting on the back seat of four-wheeler, they stood in attention, seeming to regain their energy as soldiers.

Ancadi's entrance gate was located in higher elevation. It seemed to be built in consideration of letting visitors to enjoy Ancadi's beauty.

Hajime's party were certainly admiring its beauty. The oasis in the

east was glittering while being reflected by the sunlight, and a lot of lush green vegetations growing, surrounding it. The water from the oasis was flowing within the town like rivers and there were small boats moored here and there even though it was in the middle of desert. Lush green plazas were set up around the town which made one understood how spacious the city is.

On the north was the farmland. To prove the story of Ancadi's abundance of fruit production, Hajime could see numerous amounts of fruits growing as far as his "Farsight" could see. To the west side was a big, palace-like building with pure white color unlike the other buildings which were milky white. The impressiveness and scale made one understood that this is the dwelling of the Lord. Boorish looking buildings were lined up around the palace in order which was likely to be the government ward.

While it was a desert nation, it was also just like a capital of water… that's how Dukedom of Ancadi is.

Normally, this place would be actively doing business for fruits since it was the relay point from Elisen. Moreover, it was a popular place for sightseeing and should've been filled by vigor and clamor. But now, it was covered in a gloomy atmosphere. There were only few people on the street and no store was in business. All of the doors were firmly shut, as if they were quietly waiting for the storm to pass, crouching. The silence ruled the town.

"… I wanted to show our country filled with vigor to Miss Apostle and Hajime-dono. Unfortunately, we aren't in time for that. So, let me guide you around myself once everything is solved. For the time being, let's go to my father. He is in the palace."

The party nodded at Viz's words, and they advanced with the oasis as the background.

* * *

"Father!"

"Viz! You, wh—… No, wait, what's with you!?"

Entering the place using Viz's face as a pass, Hajime's party entered the Lord's, Randzi's, office. They heard the Lord was pretty weakened, but apparently he had used a lot of healing magic and medicine, and now was working in vigor.

Randzi was surprised that his son, who departed to the Imperial Capital to ask for help, had returned. Just like the workers inside the palace, Randzi was pop-eyed seeing his son's state.

It wasn't strange. After all, Viz was floating mid-air at the moment.

More accurately, he was in a falling prone state while being carried by a Cross Bit in mid-air. Viz was severely weakened, and although Kaori's healing magic managed to help him keeping his consciousness, he could not walk by himself. When Kaori couldn't bear with it any longer and tried to help, "Ah, Apostle-sama, for me…," Viz blushed and began to watch Kaori with moistened eyes.

Thus, Hajime forcefully made the Cross Bit carried him.

Incidentally, it made it seemed Hajime was jealous. Thinking so, Kaori's cheeks were reddened and she took a peek at Hajime, but it was simply because Hajime didn't want to create another Kouki or Hiyama.

Even though he was in such a miserable appearance, clinging to the Cross Bitt, Viz quickly finished explaining to his father. As the talk advanced, a butler-like person came bringing in a powdered form of Serene Stone which Viz drank, who was still receiving Kaori's healing magic. Thus, he was cured as if there was no obstacle to prevent him from being cured.

Even so, it was only a feeling; the toxin itself was still inside his body's liquid. It was simply the effect of Serene Stone doing its work. The toxin was merged with his body's liquid, so there was possibility of it being excreted, and there was nothing more that could be done.

"Well then, we should get going. Kaori, you go with Shia to the medical center where the patients are. Bring along Magic-Crystallization Stones. The rest will be securing the water. Lord, is there a broad space around 200 meters on all sides at the lowest?"

"Hmm? Um, though there's one in the farming area…"

"Then, other than Kaori and Shia, we will go there. Shia, you must go to Yue if the Magic-Crystallization stones are full."

Hajime issued instruction to all of the members. What Hajime's party needed to do was simple. Just like Viz's case, Kaori will use "Holy Ground" to extract magic power from the patients little by little and delayed the disease's progression using "Ten Thousand Heaven." The extracted magic power will be stocked inside Magic-Crystallization stones. Then, it will be carried to and used by Yue to create water once they were filled.

After he helped Yue create a reservoir, Hajime will go towards the Oasis. He was going to investigate the cause. He will solve it if he find the cause, but if not, he will just go to «Guryuu-en Great Volcano». It was such a plan.

Everyone nodded vigorously towards Hajime's instruction.

* * *

Currently, the Lord, Randzi, the guards, and his attendants went to a corner of the farmland area in northern part of Ancadi, followed by Hajime, Yue, Tio, and Myuu. The plain was almost three times of the 200 meters on four sides. Normally, it was the place where a certain crop was grown, but it was now in its resting period.

Currently, the dubious Randzi was staring dagger into Hajime's party expressing that if not for the emergency situation, they would receive capital punishment. Although he truly wanted to secure water, common sense told him Hajime's plan was an impossible one thus it couldn't be helped that Randzi was glaring at him.

However, his doubting gaze was instantly turned into an astonished after Yue used her magic.

“”Threat Destroyer.””

A black, swirling orb immediately appeared above the farmland where her right hand was outstretched to. That orb changed its shape above the farmland, into a thin square which spread horizontally and the square was already around 200 meters in length. Thus, after a moment of stagnation, it fell to the ground without making a sound and casually crushed the ground.

The ground sunk due to the terrific pressure, and the earth tremored. It was as if the ground itself was screaming. After a moment, the 200 meters on all side of the farm that had received the supergravity pressure formed a huge reservoir with five meters in depth.

Hajime sneaked a look at Randzi and his subordinates, and every single one of them had their jaws dropped far that their jaws might have dislocated. Their eyes widened and seemed to pop. The impact was too strong that they turned speechless, all of them were shouting, “Huwwhuuattt—!?”, in their minds.

Having activated Age of Gods magic with half of its output, “Fuu,” Yue exhaled. Although her magic power was exhausted by suddenly consuming a large amount of magic, her expression did not change since she felt only a slight tiredness. Though it would be okay if she took the magic stored inside Magic-Crystallization stone just like the battle in Ul, she thought of keeping the magic power inside the Magic-Crystallization stone as much as possible because they were going to challenge «Guryuu-en Great Volcano»

after this. Moreover, because they were not in a battle, Hajime used Yue's other method of replenishing her magic power.

Yue's body was swaying as if she was about to fall, but she displayed she didn't need to be supported. It was something she wanted to do, so she didn't want to fall because of this. Eventually, with a thud, Yue's body leaned on Hajime's arm.

From behind her, Hajime embraced Yue a little, and lifted her. This time he was embracing her from the front. Yue was smiling in joy, and answered his embrace by wrapping her arms on Hajime's neck.

Following that, "…Thank you for the treat." Then, she bit Hajime's neck.

BITE!~ CHU~,

Blood flowed from Hajime's body. Yue, absent-mindedly with moistened eyes, was licking Hajime's neck multiple times. Yue's amorousness despite her appearance was further increased when she sucked Hajime's blood. It made one think pheromones was discharged from all over her body, turning the atmosphere into one of a bewitchment.

Nh, ah, chu chu, fuu

The appearance of the beautiful little girl using her tongue to lick the scruff of Hajime's neck while making small, lewd, gasping

sounds made everyone forgot to question Yue's race, when thinking normally, was actually the hateful, bloodsucker. The surrounding men were slouching. Only the Lord, as expected of a Lord, had recovered from his astonishment and stared daggers at Hajime's party. A lot of things were swirling inside his head. He thought they were being a little too arrogant, he thought of things seriously and his eyes became bloodshot.

Incidentally, though Tio also wanted to exhibit her pervertedness, she was completely blindfolding Myuu from behind because it was too early for Myuu, while being aroused herself. "Myuu can't see~," Myuu complained only to be hugged from behind and could not resist since her head was wrapped by breasts far bigger than Shia's.

Converting Hajime's blood into magic power using "Blood Conversion," Yue quietly separated from Hajime's neck after she licked it for once more. Then, she kissed Hajime's lips. Hajime and Yue were looking at each other with burning gazes and Ahem!, it ended with coughs. They came from Randzi, the Lord, and the slouching men. Thinking they overdid it, Hajime and Yue made wry smiles… then they turned around and began to kiss again.

"No, no, no, you should do it where we can't see… I also have various guesses about that thing, the bloodsucker, but for the time being, I want you to do the thing that should be done… Rather, shouldn't you be the one who understands it the most!?"

The Lord's rebuttal made Hajime and Yue shrugged their shoulders in reluctance, leering at Randzi and the others who were irritated by their gestures, they began their work.

Hajime went into the reservoir, and took out the four-wheeler from “Treasure Box.” Using land-leveling function installed in four-wheeler, he used “Mineral Separation” and coated the surface of the reservoir with metal so water couldn’t be absorbed. After Hajime returned when he finished the coating, Yue thrust out her arm and used water element magic against the instant-reservoir.

“”Fissuring Wave.””

It was one of the high-ranked, Water element magic which created a huge wave to crush the enemies. For an ordinary magic-user, though it was called a huge wave, it would only be a tsunami around ten to twenty meters, squarely. However, the number changed once Yue used it. A tsunami with width of 150 meters and height of 100 meters was created, immediately flowing into the reservoir. In the middle of it, she sucked Hajime’s blood so many times to replenish her magic power, and thus, as much as half of her magic power was saved. However, there was also a limit on how much blood Hajime had.

Any further, he would become anaemic due to loss of blood, but Shia came at this time. In her hands were the Magic-Crystallization stones from Kaori. Although it was drained little by little, the magic power was drained from several thousands of patients. Thus, a large amount had been saved up. Not even two hours had passed since Kaori came to the medical center, but in such a short time, Kaori was able to treat a large number of patients. She certainly was also a cheat-like character.

Shia returned to help Kaori again and at the same time, Yue activated “Fissuring Wave” in rapid succession. Before long, the forty thousand square meters reservoir was filled with fresh, unpolluted water.

“…Such a thing…”

Dumbfounded, Randzi was staring at the surface of water before him, reflecting by the sunlight and glittering just like an oasis. He was speechless.

“It is enough for now. Next, I am going to examine the oasis… if I don’t come to understand anything, then it is okay for you to ask for water from the Kingdom at that time.”

“Ah, yeah. Well, I have a lot I want to ask… but thank you. You have my gratitude. With this, my people won’t die from dehydration. Also, let me guide you to the oasis.”

Although Randzi was still recovering from the shock, he knew what should be done, so his attitude completely changed and he sincerely said his gratitude to Hajime’s party.

Hajime and the others moved straight to the oasis.

Unchanging, the oasis was beautifully glittering, reflecting the sunlight, and it did not seem to contain any poison.

However…

“…Nn?”

“…Hajime?”

Frowning, Hajime stared at a spot inside the oasis. Noticing his change, Yue tilted her head and asked Hajime with a doubtful expression.

“Well, that, my Magic Eye was reacting to something just now… Lord, to what length has the survey team examined it?”

“… I am certain it was the substances inside the oasis and the river flowing from it. They also investigated the substance in various wells and the underground river. The water’s substance was just as you heard from my son, but no abnormality was found in the underground river. Moreover, the range of examination was only several tens of meters from the oasis. The bottom of the oasis itself hadn’t been examined.”

“Had an artifact sunk into the oasis?”

“? No, I don’t think so. Although the guards and the management of the oasis used an artifact, it was set up above the ground… It is a barrier-type artifact, so it shouldn’t be able to pollute the oasis. As for the proof, the oasis had never been polluted before.”

The artifact Randzi spoke about was called “Cutter of What Intended,” and it was actually the dome of light protecting Ancadi. It was a useful barrier that prevented sand from entering while allowing the necessity such as air and moisture to pass through, but

the things capable of passing could also be decided by the setter. In addition, it was not just a simple barrier since it also had detecting function, and what was detected could also be set. By setting it in default, it was possible to detect whether one's soul was affected by a magic of dark element.

In other words, if it was set to "those who have malicious intent towards the oasis," the person who set it, Randzi, would know if the "Cutter of What Intended" was reacting to something. However, the Lord himself didn't know whether there was a hidden requirement. Incidentally, up until now, a lot of people had been going in and out during the examination while the guards had been off-duty due to the oasis being polluted already.

"…Hee~. Then, I wonder what's with that."

Having the oasis of Dukedom of Ancadi polluted, the appearance of Randzi clenching his fists in bitterness made one think he was indeed Viz's father. Looking at Randzi with narrowed eyes, Hajime laughed while understanding Randzi had misunderstood his words. Hajime's Magic Eye was certainly seen "something" releasing magic power in the bottom of the center of the oasis.

The thing that shouldn't be there made Randzi and the others agitated. Coming near the oasis, Hajime took out a 500ml pet bottle-shaped metal object from "Treasure Box" and supplied it with magic power. Next, he casually threw it into the oasis.

Trotting, Hajime moved away from the oasis and stood next to Yue. Though everyone wore doubtful expressions, Hajime didn't say anything. Following that, Randzi finally came to ask Hajime. And at that moment,

BAAAANNNGGGG!!!

A huge explosive sound rang out accompanied by the oasis spouting a huge column of water. Randzi and his subordinates were once again slackjawed and pop-eyed.

“Tch, was it evaded? …No, it must be because it has high defense, huh?”

Saying so, Hajime took out ten of the same thing and thrown them into the oasis. Following that, after several seconds, huge explosions and huge columns of water appeared all over the oasis.

What Hajime threw were the so called torpedo. Because the next Seven Great Dungeon over the Elisen, «Meljeenae’s Seabed Ruin», was located at the bottom of the sea (according to the information from Miledi), Hajime made prototypes of weapons that could be used in the sea, the torpedo. He threw them because he now had the time and a place to experiment them. The result was, although it had a good amount of power, its homing and speed was not that good. Improvements were necessary.

The torpedoes were equipped with crystal created by Creation magic which was capable of “Specific Perception” and “Pursuit.” They would run after the enemy, and once the enemy was locked, it would explode upon contact. What it meant was, something was inside the water, and he used the experimental weapons to chase after it.

“Oy, oy, oy! Hajime-dono! What in the world are you doing!? Ahh! The pier is blown off! The fishes are dead! The oasis is dyed in red!”

“Tch, it still couldn’t be caught, huh. Well then, next will be 50…”

Randzi was screaming because of the scenery of the oasis was gradually turning worse, but Hajime muttered without a care and moved out. Randzi, along with his subordinates clung to Hajime, desperately trying to stop him.

From Randzi’s view who didn’t know about the “something” seen by Hajime’s Magic Eye, Hajime had suddenly threw out unknown objects which blasted the oasis one after another along with the pier and the fishes. It was a confusing situation since the barrier didn’t see it as an evil, destructive action. Randzi couldn’t conceal his confusion, however, he still desperately tried to protect the oasis.

Irritated by Randzi and the others clinging to him, Hajime tried to shake them off as he advanced. However,

WOOOOSH!

Numerous tentacles came out of the water cutting the wind, and it attacked Hajime and the others. Immediately, Hajime intercepted it some using Donner-Schlag and the tentacles coming out of the water were blown off. Yue froze them while Tio used fire to evaporate the tentacles.

As Randzi and his subordinates looked at the oasis, wondering what happened, but they were once again astonished by the spectacle of something appearing from the oasis. They thought the surface of the water raised because of anger from Hajime's bombing. It kept rising up and became a little mountain with the height of around ten meters.

"What is… that…"

Randzi muttered with a blank expression, but his words were resounded clearly.

Arifureta: Volume 9 Chapter 5

Chapter 85 of the Web Novel.

The Thing Lurking in the Oasis

The thing appearing in the oasis was 10 meters in length, it has numerous tentacles wriggling around, and a magic stone shining in red was inside of it. A slime… it was the most suitable word to describe it.

However, its size was abnormal. Slime-type demonic beasts were normally one meter in length, at best. Moreover, there should be none with power to manipulate the surrounding water. It should only capable of manipulating tentacles that were part of its own body.

“What the… what’s with that demonic beast? Is it… a Vachram?”

Randzi muttered in blank surprise. Vachram itself was a slime-type demonic beast of this world.

“Well, I don’t care whatever it is. In the end, isn’t this the thing polluting the oasis? So, it is most likely to have a peculiar magic that excreted the poison.”

“… What you’re thinking should be right. But, can Hajime-dono defeat it?”

While Hajime and Randzi were conversing, the Oasis-Vachram was still attacking in anger by using its tentacles. Yue and Tio were dealing with those tentacles with ice magic and fire magic respectively. Hajime was also intercepting while talking using Donner-Schlag, and though he aimed at the core-like red magic stone, he could not easily hit it since the magic stone moved around the body, as if it had its own will.

Seeing Hajime's artifacts and magic from Yue and Tio, Randzi had given up being surprised and decided to just ignore them which resulted in him being capable of calmly ask Hajime that question.

"Nn~… yeah, there's no need to worry. I've caught it now."

Replying casually to Randzi's question, Hajime quietly put Schlag back into its holster and used both hands to ready Donner while narrowing his eyes, following the track of the moving magic stone. His right arm thrusted straight forward and left arm's elbow slightly bent. His feet, one positioned forward and one backward. It was the shooting posture called Weaver Stance, the pose to accurately fire Donner.

Hajime's eyes sharply narrowed just like those of a hawk's, completely capturing the movement of that magic stone. Then…

KABOOM!!

With a dry explosive sound, a line of flash cut through the air as

though they were pulled by a magnetic force. The moving magic stone, while ignoring the law of inertia, was shot through by the flash, and it could be said the magic stone was being voluntarily being hit.

The impact and heat from the railgun instantly annihilated the magic stone, and at the same time, Oasis-Vachram lost its power and the water it manipulated returned into normal water. WoOoOoOSH～! A large amount of water poured down. Randzi and his subordinates were watching the generated rough waves.

“… Is it over?”

“Ah, there’s no more magic power reaction from the oasis now. I don’t know whether annihilating the cause is equal to purifying it though.”

With Hajime’s words indicating he easily repulsed the cause of Ancadi’s desperate situation only made Randzi and his subordinates puzzled. Even so, because the cause was certainly annihilated before their own eyes, one of Randzi’s subordinate came to examine the water’s substance in a panic.

“… How is it?”

“… No, it is still polluted.”

Randzi asked with an expectant tone, but his subordinate was shaking his head in disappointment. They knew the people were infected by the water drawn from the oasis, but they could not

conceal their disappointment after finding out that it was still polluted even though Oasis-Vachram was no longer there.

“Well, there’s no need for thee to be disappointed. With the cause gone, the pollution won’t advance. And the water from the oasis comes from the fresh water in the underground water pulse, so the oasis will be able to return to its normal state if the polluted water is exhausted.”

Tio told Randzi and his subordinates to comfort them, thus Randzi and his subordinates began to pull themselves together, displaying their wills. Their appearances, with Randzi, ruler of Ancadi, in the center showed how much they loved this country. It was a country that existed in a severe environment, so the patriotism was high.

“… But, I wonder just why that Vachram-like demonic beast is doing in the desert… Was it a new kind of demonic beast that came from underground water pulse?”

Having pulled himself together, Randzi tilted his head while looking at oasis. And Hajime was the one who answered him.

“It is just my guess, but… it was probably the work of Demon race, right?”

“!? Demon race? Hajime-dono, you must know something to be able to say that, right?”

Randzi was surprised by Hajime's words, but he instantly regained his composure and urged Hajime to explain. Randzi was looking at Hajime, the one who secured the water and annihilated the cause of pollution, with respect and trust. There's no more trace suspicion that he had in the beginning.

Hajime guessed the Oasis-Vachram was a new demonic beast created by Age of Gods magic Demon race had. There's the peculiarity of Oasis-Vachram, coupled with the fact the Demon race was also aiming at Aiko in Ul and the Heroes in Orcus.

It was probably one of Demon race's scheme, using demonic beast. The Demon race was investigating and erasing dangerous, unknown element and the key point in northern of the continent before the war. The proofs were how they aimed at Aiko, an existence that could affect food supply, and the Heroes from another world the Church of the Saints summoned to fight against Demon race.

As for Ancadi, it was the key point of food supply since it was the relay point of marine products from Elisen and it also produced large amount of fruits and other food ingredients. Moreover, if Ancadi was attacked, it was hard to call for help because it is located in the middle of the Great Desert. So, it wouldn't be odd for Demon race to aim for Ancadi.

Being told so, Randzi raised a low groan with a bitter expression.

"I've heard about the demonic beast. We also did our own investigation about it but… I've never expected they could create such a thing… how naive of me."

“Well, it isn’t something you can help, right? After all, even the Imperial Capital didn’t get information about new kinds of demonic beasts. Furthermore, the case where the Hero’s party was attacked was only recently. And that must have created commotions everywhere right now.”

“Maybe it is about time for them to move make a move, huh… Hajime-dono… although you introduced yourself as an adventurer… those artifacts and power, as expected, you are the same as Kaori-dono…”

Without saying anything, Hajime shrugged his shoulders, thus Randzi stopped asking, thinking Hajime must have his own circumstance. No matter what the circumstance was, it didn’t change the fact that Hajime’s party saved Ancadi. There’s no need to make any useless inquiry to their benefactors.

“… Hajime-dono, Yue-dono, Tio-dono. Let this Lord of Ancadi, Randzi Fuad Zengain, show his gratitude on behalf of this country. You have saved this country.”

Saying so, Randzi and his subordinates bowed their heads. It wasn’t an easy thing for the Lord himself to bow his head, but regardless whether Hajime is one of the “God’s Apostles,” Randzi would still bow his head. And although only a short time had passed, Hajime understood Randzi held an extraordinary patriotism. This was also the reason why his subordinates didn’t stop Randzi from bowing his head to someone who introduced himself as a mere adventurer, and they also bowed their heads. Such personality was also passed onto his son, Viz. Their gesture, speech, and behavior were alike.

Towards them, Hajime was smiling broadly while saying,

“Ah, you have expressed your gratitudes. Also, please don’t forget about this huge favor.”

He expected them to return this favor. Well, it was not something new. Hajime said, “No, please don’t worry about that. This is something natural to do as a person,” clearly and humbly, thus Randzi was inadvertently dumbfounded thinking Hajime had casually said he wanted something. Randzi himself actually didn’t mind giving him anything as his thank towards the country’s saviors, but he didn’t expect it to be said straight to his face.

Hajime had thought there’s no need for gratitude since it was necessary for him to make Ancadi secure because he needed to entrust them with Myuu, and there’s Kaori’s request, too.

However, because they made their way to express their gratitude, it wouldn’t be bad to have more people as allies in a time of emergency, so he clearly told them it was a favor. Hajime thought Randzi would sincerely correspond to it, but he was also a politician, so Hajime needed to make sure of it.

“Ah, ahh. Of course. It will be remembered forever… But, there are still many people suffering in Ancadi, can I ask your help in their behalf?”

It was something Randzi was used to, as a politician and as a noble, but Randzi was a little perplexed due to the too straight forward words said by Hajime. Before long, as if he had come to an

agreement, Randzi nodded with a wry smile. Afterwards, he requested Hajime to procure “Serene Stone” for the sake of saving those infected.

“My original objective was «Guryuu-en Great Volcano». Thus, there’s no problem in getting it at all. However, just how much should I gather?”

With Hajime easily accepting his request, Randzi patted his chest in relief, next he told Hajime the current number of patients and the amount needed to be gathered. Although it was a considerable amount, it was not a problem because Hajime possessed “Treasure Box.” Normal adventurers might not be able to save all of the infected, so Randzi was thanking God to have met Hajime’s party.

* * *

Accompanied by Shia inside the medical center, Kaori displayed storm-like activities. She simultaneously extracted magic power from the more urgent patients and filled the Magic-crystallization stones. She also delayed the progress of disease for the patients gathered within radius of ten meters from her and used healing magic at the same time to recover the patients from their weakened state.

Shia was using her herculean strength to move the immobilized patients at once. She wasn’t moving using the wagon, but she lifted the wagon filled with the patients and jumped above the buildings, going back and forth the medical facilities. It was because it was more efficient to gather the more urgent patients around Kaori than her going around each of the facilities.

This method created an unbelievable spectacle starring the should be incompetent rabbit-eared girl, made a lot of patients begin to think their disease had gotten worsen, and thus created such illusion. Despair poured into the medical facilities, creating unnecessary chaos.

The medical staff themselves had used high-ranked magic in succession, and they became astonished when they saw Kaori used several healing magic simultaneously as if it was a natural thing. Once their astonishment passed, they now held deep respect towards Kaori, and treated the patients according to Kaori's instructions.

Hajime and the others arrived at the group gathered around Kaori. Afterwards, Randzi spoke out loud about the water being secured and how the cause had been annihilated which resulted with everyone shouting out of joy at the same time. Smiles began to return to the people who were despairing from the amount of death and how they could not secure safe water in the middle of the desert.

The information was immediately conveyed to the other facilities. The infected people regained up their energies because they only needed to endure a little while and they would be saved.

"Kaori, we are going to challenge «Guryuu-en Great Volcano». So, how long can you hold on?"

"Hajime-kun…"

Inside the medical facilities filled with shouts of joy, Hajime walked up to Kaori, who didn't stop treating the patients, and asked.

Kaori was so glad once she seen Hajime's figure, but she immediately made a serious expression, watching an empty space. Next, she finished her calculation, turned to look at Hajime and answered with, "Two days." She might have judged that was the very limit regarding both her magic power and the patients' endurance.

"Hajime-kun. I, I will stay here and treat the patients. Please gather the Serene Stone. It seems to be a valuable mineral… but no one except Hajime can do it because a large amount is needed. I am sorry… even though I know Hajime-kun doesn't concern himself with this world…"

"If it's just that much, then I can just gather them while entering deeper into the volcano. It doesn't matter if I need to search on the surface… In short, I only need to conquer the dungeon faster. Also, there's no need for you to apologize. After all, it is something I decided myself… Besides, I couldn't just leave Myuu in a place where people collapsed and died, right?"

"Fufu… I see. Then, good luck, and leave Myuu-chan to me."

Kaori had heard about the Mad Gods and the purpose of Hajime's travel on their way to Ancadi. She also heard Hajime would return to their original world even if it means to abandon this world. He also told her to return to Kouki and the others if she couldn't agree

to his way. Having heard all of those, Kaori's will didn't waver; she wanted to continue following Hajime.

Even in this current case, if Hajime decided to abandon Ancadi, and although she would try to persuade him, she would just give up if there's no effect.

However, it was the truth that she wanted to become the strength for the people of Ancadi, if she could. She was inadvertently looking at Hajime with petitioning gaze at that time when Hajime was thinking about his decision. She wasn't conceited that her desire would be the same as Hajime's decision, but Kaori's gaze must have influenced Hajime's decision since he shrugged his shoulders a little with a wry smile when he received her gaze.

That's why, the way it seemed that Hajime was going along with her selfish desire made Kaori hold a complex feeling.

However, Hajime only indifferently shook his hand towards the apologizing Kaori. Having seen through Kaori's feeling, he told her not to mind since it was something he decided on. Kaori smiled at Hajime, who was worried about her although he said so in a blunt manner, and who casually showed a father-like attitude. She looked at him with a gaze filled with trust and affection.

"I will also do my best… so please come back safely. I will be waiting…"

"…O-okay."

Kaori, who narrowed her eyes dearly and exuding an aura of a wife who sends off her husband to the battlefield, made Hajime stammer inadvertently.

Since before, Kaori had been a straightforward person. Even when they were in Japan, Kaori mercilessly cut down Kouki's misunderstanding, dropping bomb onto Hajime which resulted in the classroom to suffer the storm of jealousy… those had become their daily life. And she was being even more frank since the day she confessed to him.

Hajime somehow managed to avert his gaze, but the place he averted to was… where Yue was. He saw it; Yue was watching Hajime in silence with dead, inorganic eyes. It was really terrible. He instinctively changed his gaze other way, and Kaori was there smiling with affection…

But seeing Kaori's atmosphere, our idol, Myuu dropped a bomb.

"Kaori-oneechan, Kaori-oneechan looks just like Yue-oneechan from before. Is Kaori-oneechan going to kiss Papa~?"

"Oya? So thou saw it, Myu?"

"Uh~? Myuu saw it from the gap between the fingers. Yue-oneechan looked so lovely~. Myuu also wants to kiss Papa~."

“U~m. Even this one hath not done that, thou know? So, Myuu need to wait until Myuu is bigger.”

“Uu~.”

Myuu’s innocent words made Hajime say, “This good for nothing!” an unjust anger towards Tio. As expected, with “Those eyes! Those eyess! Tres Bien!” Tio began to be aroused, but it was something trivial this time.

As for the reason, a katana-shouldering Hanya appeared right beside Hajime. Of course, it was Kaori.

“…What does that mean, ah? Wasn’t Hajime-kun going there to work on something? So, why did you kiss Yue? Tell me, how did it come to that? Was there any need to do that? While I was desperately treating the patients, the two of you were enjoying yourselves, ah? Did you even forget about me? Rather, did we separate just so you could be alone?”

Eyes without light, Kaori was looking at Hajime with a Hanya behind her. Cold sweats ran along Hajime’s cheeks. Hajime wanted to say it was because of the bloodsucking act; he and Yue wouldn’t be separated unless they kiss. But faster than him, Yue advanced.

Hajime had expected her to solve the misunderstanding, but he was a fool to expect that from Yue in this kind of situation.

Yue and Kaori looked at each other, and Yue puffed her chest in a dignified manner. Smiling after saying fu,

"… It was delicious." She informed Kaori.

"Aha, ahahahahaha."

"Fufu, fufufufufufu."

Eerie laughter coming from the two beautiful girls was echoing inside the medical center. Up until now, the staff of medical center and patients thought of Kaori as a saint, but now they were taken aback and turned their faces away so their eyes would not meet hers.

It was something they couldn't help. No one would think a person with katana-swinging Hanya behind then was a saint. Moreover, the one confronting her had a dragon clad in black clouds and thunders. They couldn't help but wanting to look away.

Towards Kaori and Yue, who were staring at each other while laughing, Hajime sighed and quickly decided to approach them to deliver forehead flicks. Shwip! An unbelievable sound rang out from the impact of the flicks. Yue and Kaori spontaneously groaned and squatted. With teary eyes, they looked up, expressing, "What are you doing," which made Hajime raised an amazed expression.

"Kaori. It's not like I and Yue had wanted to do such an act. You

understand it, right? Besides, Yue is my lover. We don't need your permission to do such a thing."

"Uh… that is so… but I don't think it is the real reason…"

Angered by that, Kaori objected to Hajime. Hajime sighed again and said, "Yue, too, there's no need to always bicker like that." However, hmph!, Yue turned her face and refused to listen to him, "This is a woman's fight… there's no need for Hajime to interfere."

Randzi and the others could only stand in place by the suddenly generated carnage. Shia reflected, "I noticed that recently my presence had been thinned." Tio was still panting hard, while Myuu turned into angry mode because Yue and Kaori were quarrelling again.

Hajime gave up on controlling the situation and decided to go to «Guryuu-en Great Volcano» as fast as possible. Kaori was not the only one being busy in the medical center, since although Hajime had told Randzi beforehand, he once again told Randzi to take care of Myuu. Smiling wryly at the relationship between Hajime and his party, Randzi readily agreed to take care of Myuu.

Myuu had been persuaded beforehand, but as soon as she guessed Hajime was going to leave, Myuu looked down with a lonely expression. Hajime kneeled to match Myuu's eye-level and patted her head.

"Myuu, I am going. Be a good girl and wait for me, okay?"

“Uh, Myuu will be a good girl. So come back quickly, Papa.”

“Ah, I will return as fast as possible.”

Grasping the end of her clothes tightly with both hands, Myuu was enduring her tears. And the appearance of Hajime gently patting Myuu, even if they weren’t related by blood, made everyone see them as nothing but a father and his child. The cold, post-carnage atmosphere has turned warm. Hajime pushed Myuu’s back towards Kaori’s side. Yue, Shia, and Tio moved out in order.

Hajime was about to turn on his heel, when Kaori called out to him.

“Ah, Hajime-kun… that’s, have a safe journey.”

“Ou, please take care of Myuu.”

“Un… also, that is… can I ask for a, kiss? Like… a kiss to pray for a safe trip.”

“… Of course you can’t. Rather, what’s with that?”

“On cheek is okay, too, you know? Still no?”

Although she was fidgeting with flushed cheeks, Kaori's tone was unexpectedly a strong one. Apparently her rivalry with Yue made her think she must not back out at such a time. Hajime recalled that he noticed Kaori was rather proactive at the time they were still in Japan, but the Kaori after confessing to him was even more proactive.

Hajime ignored the rabbit-ear who said, "Ah, then me, too!," from behind him and decided to flatly refuse Kaori, but he was attacked by an unexpected enemy.

"Myuu, too~. Myuu wants to kiss Papa, too!"

Kaori took an advantage of Myuu, who innocently reached out to Hajime. Hajime wanted to say a lot of things and evade her (Myuu isn't that strong after all), but finally,

"Papa, Papa hates Myuu?"

Saying so with teary eyes, Myuu endured herself from crying.

In the end, Kaori, Myuu, and somehow Shia were kissed on their cheek. And this time, in a place where a lot of patients were lying down, they were watched with warm gazes although they didn't know why. Afterwards, Hajime, as if running away, went towards «Guryuu-en Great Volcano».

By the way, although Tio also wanted a kiss, Hajime rashly insult her because she was being too cocky which resulted in her being even more excited. Let just say it turned into something disgusting.

Arifureta: Volume 9 Chapter 6

Chapter 86 of the Web Novel.

Guryuu-en Great Volcano

«Guryuu-en Great Volcano»

It is situated 800 kilometers towards the north of the Dukedom of Ancadi. From what could be seen, it was a huge mountain five kilometers in diameter and 3,000 meters in altitude. It didn't have cone-like appearance similar to those of normal active volcanos. It has dome-like, flat top made of lava, and it would be more appropriate to call it a gigantic hill than a mountain. However, the altitude and scale were just abnormal.

The «Guryuu-en Great Volcano» was commonly known as one of the Seven Great Dungeons. However, unlike «Orcus Great Dungeon», it wasn't much visited by adventurers. It was because of the danger inside and how troublesome it was. In addition, unlike the «Orcus Great Dungeon», demonic beasts from whom the magic stones were gathered from were scarce… those were the basic reasons, but the foremost was actually because only few people were capable of reaching the entrance.

The reason was,

“… It looks just like Laputa.”

“… Laputa?”

Hajime unconsciously muttered while recalling the scene of that masterpiece anime, which made Yue and the other girls look at him with questioning glances. Hajime only shrugged his shoulders and watched the gigantic swirling sandstorm from inside the four-wheeler.

That’s right, just like how the floating castle was wrapped by cumulonimbus cloud, the «Guryuu-en Great Volcano» was wrapped by gigantic, swirling sandstorm. The storm’s scale was so huge that it completely hid the «Guryuu-en Great Volcano», and the tornados of the sandstorm were just like a flowing wall.

Moreover, a large amount of demonic beasts such as Sandworms were lurking inside the sandstorm, and they would mercilessly make surprise attacks within the place that had limited range of view. Thus, Hajime could only nod at the tale where people with average ability wouldn’t be able to pass through the sandstorm, and into «Guryuu-en Great Volcano».

“I am glad we aren’t walking here.”

“Indeed, even I doth not wanteth to enter it with mine own body.”

Looking at the giant sandstorm from the window just like Hajime,

Shia and Tio were grateful to the four-wheeler. Smiling wryly, Hajime said, “Then, let’s go.” and the four-wheeler dashed out. For this case, they didn’t come to conquer it leisurely. There wasn’t that much Serene Stone on the surface, so it was necessary to go into the untouched depth of the dungeon to obtain the amount needed. And if they go into the deepest part, there should be a shortcut similar to what they have experienced until now. As such, they would be able to immediately return to Ancadi.

Hajime, himself, wasn’t interested in the safety of Ancadi’s people, but he didn’t mind helping them. By doing so, he would at least not to feel guilty towards his companion, Kaori, nor would he let Myuu see a spectacle that would bring great shock to her.

While thinking this, Hajime regained his spirit and charged into the gigantic sandstorm.

Inside the sandstorm was a world painted in brown. Just like in the fog of«Halteena Sea of Trees», it was hard to see ahead. It was also capable of influencing one’s physical condition, so it might be more troublesome than that fog. Thus, even using magic, breaking through this place filled with hidden demonic beasts was indeed virtually impossible.

Light coming from the headlight made out of Green Light stone cut through the dim place where the sunlight could not reach. Their speed was 30 kmph. If the information they got before was accurate, they would break through the sandstorm within five minutes.

And at that time, Shia’s rabbit ears stood straight and Hajime also reacted, one beat after her. “Brace yourself!,” Hajime raised his

voice, and grandly turned the steering wheel.

Three sandworms with their big mouths opened and jumped out from below. Evading the ambush, the four-wheeler created S-letter on the ground, and Hajime kept running away without a care. With four-wheeler's speed, it would be better to quickly get out of the sandstorm than fighting each time something appeared.

Two more sandworms came to attack from both sides of four-wheeler while it was dashing out and ignored the previous three sandworms. Their timing was so good that the four-wheeler's body would receive body blows. However, it would hit without damaging the four-wheeler at all, and the four-wheeler would only be turned sideways. That's why, once Hajime grasped the surprise attacks using "Sign Perception," he immediately tried to drift to evade. However, Yue and Tio stopped him.

"…Nn, leave it to me."

" Just leaveth it to this one, Master."

Hearing the two, Hajime unhesitatingly kept the steering wheel straight as it was. Then, the gigantic worms dashed out of the brown colored world.

However, the attacks coming from the sandworms from left and right side couldn't even touch four-wheeler.

“””Wind Blade.”””

Seeing the sandworm on the left, Yue muttered and a blade of wind was instantly produced outside the four-wheeler and fired, drawing a trajectory using the sand on the air. Thus the sandworm that jumped out before them was horizontally slashed, and blood scattered from the divided sandworm.

That spectacle was similar to what happened on the right side, which Tio had taken care of.

“Hmm, as expected of thee, thee fired a good wind.”

“… There’s no way I won’t use the wind from the sandstorm. Tio, too, as expected of you.”

Similarly, they instantly chose to use wind element magic, “Wind Blade,” and though it was a beginner-ranked magic, the “Wind Blades” previously fired were as strong as mid-ranked magic. The reason was because they used the raging wind outside. Simply, the strength of magic wasn’t only affected by magic power, thus the best magic used was selected according to the condition and environment of the location. However, even though saying it was simple, it was difficult to actually do it. For Yue and Tio to be capable of doing it, it was indeed as expected of their competency.

Behind them, the three sandworms from before were still following. They had considerable speed as they advanced under the ground. Irritated by them, Hajime activated four-wheeler’s gimmick. Briiing! Such a sound came from back part of four-

wheeler and one of its rear part opened. Several black, round objects rolled down from there.

The moment some met up with the sandworms pursuing the four-wheeler, they created huge explosions. The impact blew away the ground, and the sandworms advancing underground came out of the ground while scattering flesh and blood. Towards the sandworms, more black object, grenades, rolled and caused more explosions that blew away half of each of the sandworms. Their upper-bodies were blown off, fluttered mid-air, and disappeared inside the sandstorm.

“Uhya～, amazing. Hajime-san, just how many functions are installed in this four-wheeler?”

Shia asked Hajime while looking at sandworms that were flashily blown away from the back window. Hajime was wearing a mischievous smile.

“It is capable of transforming into human-shaped weapon, a gigantic golem.”

“””…”””

Although they wanted to say it was impossible, they knew Hajime could do it, thus not only Shia, Tio and Yue were also began to silently look around inside the vehicle. Smiling wryly, Hajime said, “It was a joke. As expected, I can’t make such function… I want to though.” However, Yue and the girls were convinced that Hajime would someday capable of creating that.

Afterwards, the composed Hajime's party were also attacked by brown-colored, gigantic spider, and ant-like demonic beasts. However, all of them were crushed by four-wheeler's armament and magic from Yue and Tio without accomplishing anything, not even halting the party's advance.

Ignoring Shia who said, "I am useless here," from the back seat, Hajime's party easily broke through the gigantic sandstorm that had obstructed a lot of adventurers.

Buuahh! Hajime's party came out of the sandstorm and arrived at a rocky mountain several times bigger than Ayers Rock. It was a silent place surrounded by the wall-like sandstorm where the blue sky could be seen up above — the eye of the storm.

The entrance into «Guryuu-en Great Volcano» was at the top, so they continued to travel up on the slope using four-wheeler. The exposed rocky surface was reddish red in color, and steams gushed from here and there. Though it was an active volcano, the point where it never erupted was a Great Dungeon-like wonder.

Before long, the angle became more difficult for four-wheeler to advance, so Hajime's party got out of the four wheeler and went towards the top of the mountain on foot.

"Uwau… i-it's hot."

"Nn~…"

“Indeed. … the heat is in a different scale compared to the heat of desert’s dry weather… Even without the time limit, it would be better to quickly conquer the dungeon, huh.”

“Hmm, though this one feels comfortable here… this one can’t wait… to feel so hot that this body would writhes in agony.”

“… I will drop you into the magma later.”

Attacked by the heat as soon as they got out of the four-wheeler, other than Tio, all of them made dissatisfied expressions. Due to them being in air-conditioned place before, they felt even hotter. As adventurers in another world and travelers, for them to have withdrawal symptom similar to shut-in was… just reaping what they sowed.

They didn’t have much time, so while complaining about the heat, they quickly went towards the mountain top, climbed the rocky place quickly as if they didn’t feel any weight. As a result, Hajime’s party reached the top of the mountain in less than one hour.

They arrived at the top, a complex place buried by rocks of various sizes. There were rocks with pointed surface and also those with slippery, smooth surface. It was just like an exhibition of strange objects. Also, they could feel the top of the sandstorm nearby.

There was an exceptionally huge rock, and a group of strange-shaped rocks. It was an arch-shaped rock with the length of ten

meters.

Hajime's party went there and found huge staircase that continued on into «Guryuu-en Great Volcano» under the arch-shaped rock. Hajime stood before the staircase and looked over his shoulder towards Yue, Shia, and Tio's faces in order. With a confident expression, he said a word to challenge the Great Dungeon.

"Let's do it!"

"Nn!"

"Yes!"

"Umh!"

* * *

The inside of «Guryuu-en Great Volcano» was even more unexpected than «Orcus Great Dungeon» and «Raisen Great Dungeon».

Rather than the difficulty, it was the interior's structure that was unexpected.

First, magma was flowing mid-air. Not flowing like the waterway in dem-ihuman country, Faea Belgaen, but the magma was in the mid-air and flowing like rivers. The streaming, scorching red magma in mid-air was just like huge, jumping dragons.

Thus, the magma flowing around the passage and broad space made not only the dungeon challenger be cautious about the magma on the ground, but also above them.

Moreover,

“Ukya!”

“Woops, are you okay?”

“Ha~, Hajime-san, thank you. It was impossible for me to perceive that… the magma would suddenly spout from the ground.”

Exactly what Shia said, the magmas abruptly spouted from all around the walls. It was really abrupt that it was difficult to perceive any prior sign of it. It was similar to that of a booby trap. Fortunately, Hajime has “Heat Perception.” Without it, their conquering speed would’ve fallen due to the need to be cautious.

Following that, the thing that made it truly difficult was the boiling heat — extreme heat. It was naturally hot due to magma streaming all around the passage and broad space which made the party feel like being inside a sauna, or to be more accurate, above a heated frying pan. The heat was the most troublesome thing about «Guryuu-en Great Volcano».

While sweating, Hajime's party continued to advance while evading the drops of and the spouting magma. And in a certain broad space, they found the place has artificial cut all over the place. The place was worn down by cuts that seemed to come from something like a pickaxe, but there was a small, faint pink-colored crystal peeping from one part of the wall.

"Oh? That thing. Serene Stone… right?"

"Hmm, twas indeed that, Master."

Hajime's questioning-like words were confirmed by Tio whose knowledge was broad. Apparently, this seemed to be the place the adventurers, who passed through the sandstorm and entered «Guryuu-en Great Volcano», mined the stone.

"… So small."

"The ones at others' places were also in a size of small stones…"

Just as Yue said, the remaining Serene Stone was only almost as big as little finger. Though those could be taken out and carried, but the size was indeed too small. As expected, it was too inefficient to gather the ones on the surface, so it was necessary for them to go into the depth to be able to obtain a lot of it in a dash.

For now, Hajime used “Mineral Enquiry” to search around for Serene Stone. After he stored those that could be gathered easily, he urged Yue and the girls to move ahead, quickly.

While being disgusted by the heat, they descended into the seventh floor. It was the highest floor recorded to be reached by the adventurers. None of those who moved farther than this had come back alive. So, bracing themselves, Hajime’s party descended into the eighth floor.

At that moment,

GRuuOoOOOO!!!

When they felt fanned by a strong hot wind, a huge blazing flame came to attack Hajime’s party from right ahead of them. It advanced as it drew a spiral on the orange-colored wall.

“”Absolute Calamity.””

Yue’s magic activated against the blazing flame. A black, swirling orb appeared before Hajime’s party. It was a gravity magic. However, it was not used to crush the object on the ground.

The flame that could easily burn a person to ash was pulled by the sphere which was only 60 centimeters in diameter and disappeared without a trace. The flame swallowed by the sphere was actually nullified. The black, swirling sphere, the gravity magic called

“Absolute Calamity,” was generating its own gravity, pulled those coming near it, and swallowed them into the inside of it, like a black hole.

When all of the blazing flame was swallowed by Yue’s swirling supergravity, the party could see the identity of their attacker.

It was a bull. It stood in the middle of the magna, and its whole body was also cladded in magma. It had two sharp curved horns on its head, and flame was coming out of its mouth from time to time. The heat-proofness of this demonic beast made Hajime instinctively wanted to retort on it.

Maybe because the Magma Bull was angry that its peculiar magic, the blazing flame attack, was easily nullified, sounds of thud! Thud! could be heard from its legs and it turned into a charging stance.

To the Magma Bull, the swirling supergravity Yue created immediately moved as if being pulled toward the Magma Bull. At that moment, Magma Bull also attacked using compressed flame. The laser-like, compressed attack from the Magma Bull carried several times the power of normal flame attack.

Even now, the Magma Bull was still charging head-on. However, Yue literally received and returned the fired attack.

KABOOOOM!!

The space vibrated accompanied by an explosive sound, and the Magma Bull that stood on the magma was blown away by the attack. Blown backward by the impact, the Magma Bull struck the wall. However, “GRAAAAH!!,” it only raised an angry shout and instantly stood up. This time, it began to once again charge with all of its might to repel the intruders.

“Hah… as expected, flame attack isn’t effective on it.”

“Well, it is cladded in magma… so it can’t be helped.”

Yue, who deflected the blazing flame shot back, raised a grunt. Laughing wryly, Hajime tried to take Donner, but Shia raised a hand.

“Hajime-san, please leave it to me!”

Although Hajime doubted Shia who already held Doryukken in her hands, she snorted in full spirit. His doubt turned into trust, and he expressed his acknowledgement with a wave of his hand. It was after he had guessed Shia wanted to test the new features installed in Doryukken when his magic eye saw Shia was supplying her magic power into Doryukken.

“Alright~! I am going to do it!,” Shia raised a yell, and after few light steps, she jumped towards the Magma Bull who had moved several meters towards the party.

Rotating once in the mid-air and riding on the momentum, she swung down Doryukken towards the Magma Bull on the ground with such a perfect timing. Her aiming wasn't off, the Doryukken swung down directly hitting the Magma Bull's head. At that moment, ripples of faint blue-colored magic power spread around the center of the place where it struck, followed by tremendous impact. The Magma Bull's head popped, exploded.

Using the nailed down Doryukken as a fulcrum, Shia rotated again. She jumped over the sliding Magma Bull's body and splendidly landed on the other side.

"O-Ohh Hajime-san, I, the person who used it, now know that this new feature generated an amazing amount of force."

"Ah, looks like it… I've thought what kind of thing is this "Conversion : Impact," but this is good…"

Not only Hajime, Yue and Tio immediately raised words of praise towards the blow that Shia did with considerable force. It was thanks to the peculiar magic Hajime said, "Conversion : Impact."

This "Conversion : Impact" was a new peculiar magic Hajime acquired, a derivation from "Magic Power Conversion." The effect was just as the words expressed, it converted magic power into impact.

It was the ability of the horshead Hajime instantly turned into minced meat several days ago in«Orcus Great Dungeon». He had actually collected the meat in secret, and when he recovered the

stake, he ate it.

If it was an average demonic beasts, neither the stats nor Hajime's the skill would increase, but he ate it since he thought it might have an effect because the horsehead was able to hold on against Kouki's party along with the Kouki in limit break… But as he thought, his stats didn't change at all; he only gained the horsehead's peculiar magic.

Then, he used Creation magic to add "Conversion : Impact" to an ore and installed it into the newly built Doryukken.

Hajime watched the Magma Bull's head blasted in interest, but he was urged by Yue to hurry.

Afterwards, the demonic beast variations increased as they descended the floors. There were bat-like demonic beasts that scattered magma from their wings, scorching red moray-like demonic beasts that jumped out from the wall it melted, hedgehog-like demonic beasts that shot out numerous needles of flame, chameleon-like demonic beasts that only produced its face from within the magma and attacked using its magma-covered tongues like a whip while swimming on the gravity-defying magma river overhead, and there were even blazing serpents…

It was indeed troublesome since the demonic beasts' bodies were clad in magma or ablaze which nullified any half-assed magic, and some were using surprise attacks from the flowing magma rivers where they hid their body. The demonic beasts not only would try to inflict fatal wound by using body blow, a lot of them were also using the surrounding magma to attack; a situation where they have infinite weapon. Besides, they would run into the magma to

ensure their safety.

It was indeed true that even if the adventurers were capable of breaking through the sandstorm, they wouldn't be able to descend further than seventh floor and return. Moreover, even if the demonic beasts could be defeated, the size and quality of the magic stones were the same as the demonic beasts in forties floors of «Orcus Great Dungeon» and the existence of Serene Stone, a valuable mineral, didn't affect the income much. So, it was understandable that no one want to challenge this dungeon.

Following that, the most troublesome thing was the heat gradually increasing.

"Haa, haa… it's hot."

"… Shia, you feel hot because you think it is. Those flowing thing is just water… See, it's cool now, fufu."

"Ah, Master! Yue is starting to break! The eyes hath became hollow!"

Other than Tio, Hajime's party were downed by the strong heat. For now, he took out air-conditioning type of artifacts… but it just like sprinkling water over dry soil. Their sweat flowed like an unstoppable waterfall. Seeing Yue and Shia whose consciousness began to become hazy, Hajime thought it was necessary for them to take a little rest while he wiped off the sweat on his chin.

When they reached a broad space, Hajime used “Transmutation” on a wall away from the magma and created a tunnel. He urged Yue and the others inside, and shut the entrance to the limit so the heat from magma would not reach them directly. Furthermore, he used “Mineral Separation” and “Compressed Transmutation” to coat the surface of the room’s wall with solid material so they wouldn’t be attacked by any moray-like or magma spout.

“Fuu… Yue, please create a block of ice. We will rest here for a while. If not, it would not be odd if we make a fatal mistake later.”

“Nn… okay.”

Although her eyes were hollow, Yue conjured ice magic and a huge block of ice appeared in the middle of the room. Though Tio didn’t mind the heat, she made the wind blow with the block of ice as the core. Thanks to the wind created by Tio, the cold air from the block of ice instantly cooled down the room’s temperature.

“Whaa～～, it’s coool～, I can live on noww～.”

“… Hmmmm～.”

Collapsing in a girl’s sitting pose, Yue and Shia narrowed their eyes in delight. The birth of squishy-Yue and squishy-Shia.

While thinking the two were moe, Hajime took out towels from “Treasure Box” and handed them over to everyone.

“Yue, Shia, it is good that you’re enjoying yourselves, but wipe your sweat. Your movement will become duller if you get too cold.”

“… Nn~.”

“Roger~.”

With elongated words, Yue and Shia slowly took the towel. Seeing them, Tio spoke to Hajime.

“Master, doth not relaxed thy guard yet, okay?”

“You, too. This heat is indeed dangerous. I must create better air-conditioning type artifact…”

“Hmm, for it to be capable of defeating master… This is probably this Great Dungeon’s concept.”

Rather than defeat, hot is hot, and Tio, who also wiping her sweat with towel, made Hajime doubtful with what she said.

“Concept?”

“Mhm. This one hath heard many things from Master, but there is the thing called trial, right? If this was to challenge the God… then, there should be various concepts it based on, or so this one thought. For example, the «Orcus Great Dungeon» that this one heard from Master hath a lot of demonic beasts, so various battle experiences would be gained as one advanced through. «Raisen Great Dungeon» nullified strong power called magic, polishing one’s flexibility against any kind of attacks. This «Guryuu-en Great Volcano» probably uses the heat to obstruct one’s concentration and how one would react against the surprise attacks under this situation, right?”

“… Indeed… I never thought of it because in the end, I only needed to conquer it… but the trials are used by the Liberators to “teach” us, huh.”

“I see,” Hajime nodded at Tio’s conjecture. She has deep knowledge even though she’s a complete masochist, and the prudent Tio was normally could be thought as a beautiful, black-haired woman who exuded sensual and amorousness… so Hajime looked at her with a truly pitying gaze.

However, seeing Tio’s sweat flowing from the scruff of her neck disappearing into the valley of her bountiful breasts, Hajime averted his gaze. His gaze turned towards the clothes of Yue and Shia sticky from all the sweat. Noticing the disappearance and appearance of their bare skin, his gaze was pulled towards Yue.

Probably because she was wiping her sweat, a large amount of her skin was peeping from her pure-white dress. Her skin had a tinge of red due to heat. Her bare skin glossy from the sweat and her rougher-than-normal breathing was truly erotic.

Unconsciously, Hajime even forgot to look away and continued watching her, but his gaze suddenly met Yue's raised gaze. Having forgotten the situation due to being charmed… and getting somewhat aroused, Hajime tried to look away in guilt.

However, just before he looked away, Yue who caught Hajime's gaze revealed a bewitching smile. With the still disarrayed clothes, arching her back like a cat, she slowly got down to all fours and approached Hajime. Her hazy eyes that wouldn't let Hajime's gaze escape, flushing cheeks because of heat, and showing a tint of breasts every time she moved…

Yue, who immediately approached Hajime in all fours, sat on Hajime's cross-legged legs, sending him an upward gaze, and with a spoiled, sweet tone…

"… Hajime, wipe me?"

Hajime unconsciously received the towel from her, and his gaze remained fixed on Yue's eyes. In his mind, "Ah, crap. I can't win against Yue in this situation," he thought with a wry smile. Quietly, he tried to glide his hand on the scruff of Yue's neck… but was stopped by Shia's protest.

"Y-O-U T-W-O! Please mind the time, place, and occasion a little! We are in a hurry and this is a Great Dungeon! Geez! Seriously, geez!"

“No, well, umm. It’s not like I could help it, right? Yue is too erotic. So, I couldn’t ignore her.”

“… Hajime who was quietly staring was cute.”

“Can’t you two at least reflect a little? To begin with, why didn’t Hajime-san look at me? Even though I was right beside Yue-san and in such condition, too… Gosh, my confident plummeted~. Hey, Tio-san should say something, too.”

“Well, the two art infatuated with each other. So methinks it can’t be helped, right? This one also wants Master to abuse one without minding the place… however, well, Master reacted a little to this one’s breasts~. This one will be satisfied with just that this time. Kufufu.”

It was the usual perverted remarks of Tio. However, Hajime was found out that he felt the sweat that flowed into Tio’s breasts made her looked sexy. Hearing that, “I am not even looked at!,” Shia was angry. Shia forgot about the TPO (time, place, and occasion) she said a little while ago and began to strip before Hajime. Then, this one will strip too, but Hajime fired rubber bullets to silence them because it would turn bothersome otherwise.

Hajime continued to wipe off Yue’s sweat before the writhing Shia whose breasts was completely bare and the writhing Tio with her disgusting smile. Hajime sighed while secretly relieved that Kaori wasn’t there.

Arifureta: Volume 9 Chapter 7

Chapter 87 of the Web Novel.

The Last Trial is Easy?

«Guryuu-en Great Volcano» probably has fifty floors.

Since it was the current floor Hajime's party was in. The "probably" part was because the floor's situation was a little special. Frankly, they didn't understand anything about the current floor.

But more accurately, Hajime's party were currently on board a brown colored boulder, like a small boat, on the magma that was flowing like a big river, mid-air.

"It feels like Indiana-san in hard mode eh…" Hajime muttered while recalling the Earth's most famous and too aggressive Archeologist.

As for the reason why they were in this situation… truthfully, it was Hajime's mistake. Hajime's party had noticed the magma that continued to scorch them, was sometimes making unnatural movement while they were searching for the Serene stone right before they completed the floor.

More accurately, the flow of the magma greatly changed even

though there was nothing obstructing it before, or the current suddenly slowed, or there was only a part of magma flowing in the air, and it overflowed, thus the magma dripped below.

However, those happened on the magma away from the passage, so they didn't worry about it because it would not disturb them from conquering the floor. However, Hajime by chance used "Mineral Enquiry" to the surrounding and found out that the cause of the magma's unnatural movement was "Serene Stone." It seemed the magic power inside the magma was calmed by "Serene Stone," similar to obstructing the magma flow.

Hajime's party then thought that the place where the magma's movement was strongly obstructed would have a large amount of "Serene Stone." Thus they searched for it and they indeed discovered a large amount of "Serene Stone" buried in that place. While noting the magma's movement, Hajime's party collected a considerable amount of "Serene Stone." Afterwards, they came to a certain location while thinking there would be much stone in reserve.

It was a place enclosed by the magma flowing in mid-air like a huge wall. Hajime transmuted a stair to approach it and came to know that a large amount of "Serene Stone" was buried there when he used "Mineral Enquiry."

Immediately, Hajime used "Mineral Separation" to only collect "Serene Stone," but he was careless because he kept collecting "Serene Stone" due to lack of concentration from the heat. He didn't put much attention to the surrounding wall of magma.

Hajime noticed this mistake when he stored the "Serene stone" into

“Treasure Box.” It was because magma spouted with tremendous momentum from the wall the moment the effect of “Serene Stone” had disappeared.

Hajime immediately jumped back, but the magma was spouting with tremendous power just like water gushing out from the cracked and thus collapsed dam. The hole from where it spouted expanded and more rushed out.

The overly tremendous momentum of the magma made the surrounding immediately filled with magma. Hajime used transmutation to create a small boat before Yue’s barrier was broken, and the party boarded it. The small boat was immediately heated up by the magma, but there was no problem since Hajime had strengthened the boat using “Strength Endowment” derived from “Vajra.”

Following that, they continued to drift along the flow of the magma and was flowing mid-air before they were aware of it. They flowed into the depth of «Guryuu-en Great Volcano» using different route from the stairs. Flowing as they felt the scorching heat from the streaming magma, and ended up where they were currently at.

By the way, normally they would’ve stopped on the riverbed when they were about to ride on the magma’s sky road, but Shia used “Effect Endowment” of gravity magic to reduce the boat’s weight, and thus they were able to get on the magma. “Effect Endowment” made it possible to adjust the weight of the thing Shia touched as if it were her own.

“Ah, Hajime-san. There’s another tunnel.”

“We art almost at the level of the foot of this mountain. Be prepared, okay?”

Seeing the direction Shia pointed at, Hajime’s party was would indeed continue to flow into a big hole on the wall along with the magma. They understood the magma was continuing to flow downward. Until now, they’ve entered a tunnel every time they descent a floor, it might be a shortcut if compared to normally using the stair.

While nodding at Tio’s advice, Hajime’s party drifted into the tunnel. The magma’s sky road was continuing in the middle of the big tunnel like a snake. After the magma’s sky road was going lower, it suddenly cut off right after a curve. No, more accurately, it was a sudden downward slope similar to a waterfall.

“Again… everyone, don’t get shaken off!”

Yue and the girls nodded at Hajime’s words and they either clung to the edge of the small boat or Hajime’s waist. After feeling the anxiousness similar to when the climbing jet coaster about to go down from the first falling point, Hajime’s party’s boat finally fell.

Fwiish Swiish

Sound of wind entered their ears. Shia used gravity magic to shift the weight while Tio controlled the wind as they descend on the rapid magma. The magma’s speed increased by times as if it didn’t

have any viscosity.

Transmuting spikes on his shoes to fix his posture, Hajime cautiously watched over the surroundings. After all, usually at such time…

“Tch, they come after all.”

Clicking his tongue, he pulled out Donner at the same time, and Hajime unhesitatingly pulled the trigger. Explosive sound resounded. It rang out three times accompanied with three flashes that cut through the air without deviating and destroyed the targets. The ones that came attacking Hajime’s party were the bat-type monsters that scattered magma from their wings.

These Magma Bats were not much of a threat alone. They only have considerable speed and capable of scattering magma like flame bullets. They were only small fries to Hajime’s party.

However, the troublesome point about Magma Bats was they attacked in group. Thirty more could be found if one was seen, just like Black G demonic beasts, appearing from the crack of the boulder wall.

Even now, although Hajime instant-killed three Magma Bats, as expected, they could hear sound of a large amount of fluttering wings amidst the wind coming from the rapid descent.

“… Hajime, leave the left and behind to me.”

“Ah, I will leave it to you. Shia, Tio, you control the boat.”

“Roger!”

“Mhm, leave it to this one. How about ass spanking as a reward?”

Ignoring Tio’s perverted remark that could neither be taken as joke nor real, Hajime and Yue were back to back diagonally on the boat. Then, crowd of Magma Bats could be seen.

It was not an exaggeration to call them as one living creature. The numerous Magma Bats were moving as one big mass, like a group perfectly ordered birds. Their appearance was just like a dragon if seen from the side. It might be more accurate to call it a fire dragon because each of its wings was cladded in blazing magma.

The mass of Magma Bats approaching Hajime’s party divided into two on their way, creating pincer attack from the front and behind. No matter how weak they were alone, the numerous them were moving as one huge creature and normally would overwhelm anyone with their number.

However, the party here were a group of cheat-like individuals. The demonic beasts that became fertilizer on the ground near the town of Ul were the proof the party wouldn’t be so weak being overwhelmed by just number.

Hajime took out Metzelei from “Treasure Box,” set it beside his waist and pulled the monster’s trigger.

BAAANNNG

With the ringing of the peculiar shooting sound, the storm of death exhibited its undoubtable might and one rapid fire pierced through various targets. The bullets crushed the wall of the cave in the distance while the Magma Bats were killed and fell into the ground without being able to resist.

Furthermore, Hajime took out Orkan using the other free hand, placed it on his shoulder, and mercilessly fired it. Spark created, and the rockets flew and pierced into the middle of Magma Bats who were grouping due to Metzelei’s barrage, scattering violent impacts along with roaring sounds.

The result was clear. The crowd of Magma Bats were crushed and falling just like a short squall.

Similar thing happened to the Magma Bats attacking from the rear.

“”Storm Dragon.””

Yue’s right hand thrust straight, and the moment she muttered that, a green sphere of wind was created. Following that, the

sphere transformed, forming a dragon in less than no time. The wind dragon, who was a compilation of green-colored wind and called “Storm Dragon,” glared at the crowd of Magma Bats once, and it opened its jaws, moving to devour its preys.

Naturally, the Magma Bats shot flame bullets towards “Storm Dragon,” then they divided into two again to dodge the dragon. However, all of Yue’s “dragons” were a compound of gravity magic and other element. Naturally, “Storm Dragon” was not just composed of normal wind; it was composed of wind blades that were pulled by gravity to create a dragon. Once it moved, it would be difficult for the prey to escape.

Magma Bats, just like the other demonic beasts that became the food of “Thunder Dragon” and “Azure Dragon,” couldn’t resist from being pulled towards “Storm Dragon.” Thus the body cladded by wind blades cut the demonic beasts’ bodies to pieces, scattering flesh and blood. It should be noted that the reasons Yue didn’t use “Thunder Dragon” or “Azure Dragon” was because the Magma Bats were strong against heat and Yue judged it was enough to just cut their wings.

In the end, “Storm Dragon” came within the crowd and released the million wind blades formed its body in all direction, completely annihilating the Magma Bats.

“Um～, Master and Yue’s annihilating force art fearful no matter how many times I has’t seen i.”

“Indeed～.”

While controlling the boat on the rapid current, Tio and Shia were praising them with awkward feeling. Shrugging his shoulders as he put out Metzelei and Orkan into “Treasure Box,” Hajime lightly touched the Yue’s cheek with his chest then returned to look at the front. Yue, after narrowing her eyes in happiness from being touched, returned to look at the surrounding with caution.

Hajme and Yue who casually took the chance to flirt made Shia exuded aura that expressed, Shia is lonely! Hold me!, which Tio took advantage of. Making slightly troubled expression after thinking it couldn’t be helped, Hajime lightly stroked Shia’s rabbit ear then pinched Tio’s cheek. Hajime was troubled such things could make the two raised joyed expressions.

Hajime’s party were considerably composed even though they were attacked by demonic beasts as they descended the rapid, magma’s sky road. However, as if to take down their composure, the descending magma up until now suddenly began to ascend.

After climbing several tens of meters with tremendous speed, they could see light ahead of them. It was the exit of the tunnel. However, the problematic thing was the magma was cut off for real this time.

“Hold on tight!”

With Hajime’s command, Yue and the girls once again clung to the small boat. Having ridden on the magma rapid’s speed, the small boat was thrown outside with tremendous momentum.

While having his dantian attacked by the feeling of being in mid-air, Hajime quickly confirmed the condition of the surrounding. The space Hajime's party falling into was similar to the room where the last trial of «Raisen Great Dungeon» took place; a vast space.

However, it wasn't spherical like the room in «Raisen Great Dungeon». It has distorted shape which made it impossible to completely understand how vast the space was, but it was at least more than three kilometers. Almost all part of the ground was filled with magma, but the boulders appeared in some places and created footholds. On the surrounding walls were protruding places and conversely, there were also shaved off places. In the air was as expected, numerous rivers of intersecting magmas, and disappearing below, into the ocean of magma.

Flare-like pillars of fire spouted from the boiling, scorching ocean. If there was something called boiler of hell, it must be looked like this. That was the impression Hajime's party got.

However, the most noticeable thing was the small island in the center of the ocean of magma. The island was raised around 10 meters above the magma's surface, an island or rock. If it was only that, then it would just become a foothold big enough for them, but the island was covered by dome of magma. The spherical magma was just like a small version of sun, but the thing in the middle of the island was enough to catch the attention of Hajime's party.

“”O' wind.””

The small boat turned over by the momentum was fixed by Tio in the air, then each of them returned to their own duty as they once

again boarded the small boat. Yue used “Soar” to adjust the boat’s falling speed. The boat softly landed on the ocean of magma, and the party maximized their vigilance because this place was obviously different from the ones they had seen.

“… Is that the dwelling?”

Yue muttered as she took a look at the middle of the magma-domed island.

“From the depth, I think it is okay to think so… but, if it really is…”

“There should be the last guardian of some sort… right, Master?”

“We used something similar to shortcut, so is it too farfetched to say we have passed the test, Hajime-san?”

Hajime’s thought was confirmed by Tio, who was looking at the surrounding with sharp gaze, made her not to be thought as a perverted masochist if some small accidents were overlooked. Even seeing their tightened expression, Shia muttered optimist words while looking at a certain direction.

Tracing Shia’s gaze, Hajime could see a staircase beyond the large foothold. The staircase continued into the wall made him think that perhaps they would’ve come from that staircase if they used the proper route.

Even so, no matter how impossible it was for someone to use magma's sky road, it was too much of an optimist to think the shortcut even passed through the last trial room. It'd be nice if it really is~, Shia said, but her cautious look expressed that even she couldn't believe that.

It was correct for them to be cautious because immediately, bullet-like magma shot out from the magma flowing in the air.

"Hmph, leave it to this one!"

Tio shouted as she activated her magic, thus masses of flame shot out from the ocean of magma, countering magma approaching from above.

However, that attack was only the beginning signal. Immediately after Tio countered the incoming blazing masses and scattered them, more blazing masses were shot out from the ocean of magma like a machinegun.

"Tch, scatter!"

Judging they would only be a target on their current place, the small boat, Hajime told the other to scatter as he jumped towards the nearby foothold, abandoning the small boat. The numerous blazing masses crushed the small boat where Hajime's party were before, thus it sunk into the ocean of magma.

With each of them in different foothold, Hajime's party intercepted the incoming blazing masses. Though they easily intercepted those, Hajime's party were irritated because it didn't seem to ever end. They were also irritated the heat coming from the ocean of magma that the distorted air.

To break from this situation, at the same time Hajime finished reloading Donner-Schlag using gunspin, and aimed Schlag muzzle over his shoulder without turning around. Thus the elbow of his artificial arm was faced forward and fired to intercept the masses of magma in front, while Schlag rapid-fired to shoot down the masses of magma approaching Yue behind him.

His intention was completely read by Yue without a word. She immediately activated gravity magic using this chance.

""Absolute Calamity.""

At the same time the name rang out, a black, swirling sphere appeared in the middle of Hajime's party, pulling the incoming masses of magma one after another. The black, small star swallowed everything and used its supergravity to compress them.

With the room between the barrage of magma masses by Yue's magic, Hajime used "Aerodynamic" to jump into the air, trying to reach the magma-domed middle island.

The most troublesome thing about the barrage that attacked

Hajime's party was the endlessness. This place was obviously the last trial of «Guryuu-en Great Volcano», but because there's no visible enemy unlike the other dungeons he had been in, he didn't know what to do to clear it. As such, Hajime thought of getting on the suspicious island.

While running in the air towards the middle island, Hajime used "Telepathy."

"I am going to look around the middle island. Cover me."

"Roger."

The masses of magma outside of the range of Yue's "Absolute Calamity" came to attack Hajime, but Tio intercepted those using numerous flame bullets from the ocean of magma. Shia didn't expand Doryukken and used its shotgun mode to intercept. Yue, while maintaining "Absolute Calamity," also intercept using numerous flame bullets from ocean of magma just like Tio.

With covering from Yue and the girls, Hajime approached straight towards the middle island, and he was about to do the last jump using "Aerodynamic."

However, at that moment,

"ROOOOOOOOOOAAAAAR!!!"

“Kh!?”

Hearing the bellowing, majestic roar, a gigantic serpent came to attack from right under Hajime who was in mid-air with its opened mouth.

Maybe because its whole body was clad in magma, neither heat perception nor sign perception noticed it in this place filled with magma. Moreover, the ocean magma itself was filled with magic power so magic power perception also didn’t notice it, so the gigantic Magma Serpent was able to completely make a surprise attack.

However, Hajime twisted his body using his superhuman reflex and was barely able to evade the mouth.

In the place Hajime was before, crunch, the Magma Serpent chomped and passed through. Hajime flipped his body in mid-air just like a cat, aimed the muzzles at the passing Magma Serpent’s head and fired. The flash with certain killing destructiveness didn’t miss its mark and hit the Magma Serpent’s head, blowing it away.

“What !?”

However, the raised voice was not the Magma Serpent’s death throes, but Hajime’s astonished voice.

Naturally, the cause was the Magma Serpent. After all, the Magma Serpent's head was certainly hit and burst, but the thing scattered was only magma, none of the inside matter. He had seen demonic beasts cladded in magma in «Guryuu-en Great Volcano», but they were only wearing the magma, and had their own flesh. None was composed of only magma.

Hajime immediately recovered and tried to shoot the other parts of the creature to experiment. Numerous flashes mercilessly penetrated the Magma Serpent's body, but as he thought, there's no flesh at all. This Magma Serpent seemed to be composed of only Magma.

Though surprised, Hajime had immobilized the Magma Serpent for now by blowing all over of its body, so he once again jumped towards the middle island using "Aerodynamic", passing by the serpent's side.

However, the Magma Serpent's attack hasn't ended yet. At the moment Hajime passed through its side, it suddenly hurled its body towards Hajime even though it had lost its head and parts of its body.

Hajime made the shotshell in his artificial arm burst and barely succeeded to evade using its recoil. And at this time, a chill ran down Hajime's spine. Following his instinct, Hajime burst out the shotshells in succession immediately and used "Aerodynamic" to withdraw from there in high speed.

One attack after another, the Magma Serpents came out of the ocean of magma, chasing after Hajime's track. Those huge mouths crunch, crunch, chomped.

Retreating while rotating in the air, Hajime landed on a nearby foothold. Yue and the girls came to his side. The barrage of blazing masses temporarily stopped.

“… Hajime, are you unhurt?”

“Ah, no problem. More importantly, the real things finally appear.”

Yue, who was worried about his safety, touched his arm. Hajime returned her touch, and answered without looking away from the front. Fwuush With each sound, Magma Serpents appeared one after another before Hajime.

“As expected, that middle island is the last stop. Well thee seemth to say defeat us if thou want to pass.”

“But, the one Hajime-san shot before regenerated, you know? Are they beatable?”

Around 20 Magma Serpents appeared, glaring at Hajime’s party. Even the Magma Serpent that received gunfires from Hajime before had already restored to its former appearance as if nothing had happened.

Shia was frowning as she pointed that out. At Raisen Great Dungeon, she was confused by the regenerating knights, but now

she was calmly thinking on how to pass this. It was shown by how her rabbit ears were restlessly moving about. Wryly smiling at Shia who became quite courageous, Hajime told them his guess.

“It might be similar to the Vachram from before, having a core, a magic stone, to form the magma body. Though my magic eye cannot specify the location because the obstruction from the magma… there’s nothing else but to destroy the core.”

Everyone nodded at Hajime’s words and they simultaneously attacked the 20 Magma Serpents.

The Magma Serpents rose like the solar flare shot out masses of flame from their mouth as they tensed. The twenty attacked from all direction. Normally, one would be swallowed by the numerous masses of magma without being able to escape.

“It hath been a long time since this one used this attack! So, taste all of it!”

A huge amount of black magic power appeared before Tio’s thrust her hands out. It then compressed in less than no time, and fired in the next moment. It was the Ryuujin tribe’s Breath.

Thus the black flash, whose dreadful power forced Hajime to defend with all of his might, eliminated all of the Magma Serpents in front of Tio without any trace left. Furthermore, she swung it as if it was a black colored flash blade and annihilated other Magma Serpents.

Immediately, eight Magma Serpents were annihilated, thus Hajime's party dashed out from the hole of the encirclement.

As expected, by annihilating them without leaving a trace, the magic stone would also be annihilated no matter where the location was, but it was the Great Dungeon's quality to not make it that easy.

The 12 remaining Magma Serpents instantly crushed the foothold where Hajime's party were before, falling into the ocean of magma and disappeared, but their numbers went back up to 20 the next time they re-appeared.

"Oi oi, I've confirmed the disappearance of the magic stones, you know? Was defeating it not the condition to clear this trial?"

Hajime's expression distorted from the doubt. Hajime had activated "Light Speed" at the time Tio's breath was about to reach the Magma Serpent and he confirmed the moment when the magic stone inside Magma Serpent was annihilated by the Breath using his increased kinetic vision.

Hajime came to doubt the condition for conquering this dungeon, and Shia raised her voice while pointing at the middle island.

"Hajime-san! Look at that! The wall is shining!"

“What?”

When he looked at the middle island, it was indeed as Shia said. A part of the rockwall shot light as big as a fist. He didn’t notice it up until now, but the orange-colored light was coming from some kind of crystal buried under the wall of rock.

Hajime used “Farsight” to confirm it, but although it was difficult to confirm due to camouflage, he understood a large amount of similar crystals were buried on the rockwall of the middle island in orderly fashion. The middle island was cylindrical, so considering the interval between crystals and the island’s surface area, around 100 crystals were buried. And the crystals that currently shooting out light were eight… the same number of Magma Serpents Tio annihilated before.

“I see… so we need to defeat a hundred of these Magma Serpents to clear it, huh.”

“… In this heat, fighting a hundred of them… it matched the dungeon’s concept.”

Needless to say, having suffered from the heat and surprise attacks, the challengers were driven into the situation where they needed to concentrate the most in the very end; nastiness suitable for a Great Dungeon.

Indeed, even Hajime’s party were quite exhausted, mentally. However, their expressions didn’t show any exhaustion, they were wearing fearless smile because they had found out the method to conquer the dungeon.

They regained their spirit when they came to understand what they must do, and they once again attacked the Magma Serpents. Along with the downpouring masses of magma, the Magma Serpents made irregular movements to catch and burn their prey.

Hajime's party spread out again and respectively began to counterattack.

With dragon wings grown out of her back, Tio floated using the wind she regenerated and used tornado along with vacuum blades to attack, bombarding the serpent. It was a wind element, mid-ranked offensive magic, "Imperial Cannon."

"This is the ninth! Presently, this one is leading, Master! If this one defeated the most of them then this one wants a lot of rewards (punishments)! Of course, only two of us at night!"

Tio shouted while slashing the ninth Magma Serpents to pieces. Hajime tried to refuse with an amazed expression, but Shia interrupted him.

"Wha-! It's unfair if it's only Tio-san! I am also entering this challenge! Hajime-san, one night with me if I win!"

After shouting, Shia jumped above a Magma Serpent and swung down Doryukken onto its head from upper-stance. At the moment of impact, ripple of light blue colored magic power spread, next a violent impact was generated. The serpent immediately exploded

from the head part until the ocean of magma. Sparkling minerals fluttered from the remains of Magma Serpent. It was the magic stone crushed by the impact from “Magic Shockwave”.

Masses of magma were approaching Shia, who was still mid-air from killing one of Magma Serpent, from behind. Shia used the recoil from Doryukken’s outburst and evaded. However, as if it was aiming for this, a Magma Serpents with its mouth opened come attacking to where Shia would fall.

However, Shia wasn’t that worried about it, she threw a disk taken out from the holster on her back into the air. It was a disk with diameter of 30 centimeters, and it didn’t fall but floated slightly lower place than Shia. Shia put her foot on it weightlessly and once again danced in the air.

The disk used the same principle as Cross Bit to float in the air, becoming foothold, and moving according Shia’s will by using induction stone. This, coupled with Shia’s weight adjustment, made it possible to do a combat like “dancing in the air”.

With its calculation coming off, the Magma Snake passed through the empty space under Shia. Transforming Doryukken, Shia aimed the muzzle towards the serpent and pulled the trigger. What shot out wasn’t the usual bullet but a slug bullet.

However, it wasn’t a normal slug bullet. It was a bullet created from special ore that Hajime endowed with characteristic of “Magic Shockwave,” thus it would generate shock wave from the supplied magic power at the same time it hit the target. By force alone, it far surpassed the grenade bullet.

Along with the roar of Doryukken, the fired slug bullet didn't miss its target while hitting the Magma Serpent from back of its head, thus from its head to its body, the Magma Serpent was swallowed by the regenerated explosion. That impact once again crushed the magic stone which now fluttered as it sparkled in the air.

"Oi, girls. You, don't just selfishly…"

"… Then, I want one day of date for the two of us."

Hajime opened his mouth to retort on Tio and Shia's one-sided competition, but he was interrupted by Yue who also wanted to participate in the competition of annihilation. Putting aside the things at night, the increasing number of companions decreased their time alone, so Yue seemed to want a one full day of just the two.

Exuding aura of having fun, however, the magic Yue activated was a brutal one. It was her latest favorite, "Thunder Dragon."

However, due to her being more and more skillful on using it, the "Thunder Dragon" that appeared was numbered seven. At almost the same time, they moved toward their respective targets. Thundering roars rang out. The Magma Serpents who were trying to devour Yue was conversely devoured one after another by the group of Thunder Dragons without even leaving a mass of magma behind, so their magic stone inside their body had also broken.

Seeing that spectacle, Shia said, “As I thought, the most powerful enemy is Yue-san～!” Tio said, “Yue is bugged! Twas absolutely odd!” Both of them made hasty expressions while cursing. They pull out more severe attacks, adding the number of things they annihilated.

“… It’s not like I care. But, they seem to having fun.”

Shrugging his shoulders towards the three enthusiastic girls that made him as the prize of the competition, Hajime somewhat given up. Then, without turning around, he rapidly fired Schlag over his shoulder towards the incoming Magma Serpent behind him.

The bullets were fired evenly on the Magma Serpent’s body and the impacts blown the serpent’s body. At the same time, the impacts made the magic stone fluttered in the air. Repelling the masses of magma that flew from the previous half body, Hajime pinpoint shot through the falling magic stone right before it fell into the ocean of magma.

The bullet Hajime fired from Schlag was the similar exploding bullet like Shia’s. However, because it would be problematic if the bullets were too big, their power didn’t reach slug bullet’s. Of course if he used Schlagen, then it would be possible to bring out that much of a destructive power. However, it was the first time the bullets were used, similar to an experiment, so he only used the two guns.

The normal sized bullet didn’t have the power to blow away the Magma Serpent along with its magic stone, so Hajime now used around 2 shots to blown off the magma armor and sniped the exposed magic stone using Donner’s pinpoint attack. Naturally, the

Schlagen was capable of ignoring the magma armor and penetrate through the magic stone, but it had too much penetrative power added that it wasn't easy to locate the magic stone thus wasn't suitable for aiming at the magic stone.

Now, another two Magma Serpents were attacking Hajime from his right and left, but he withdrew in high speed using "Aerodynamic" and "Ground Shrinker." He flipped mid-air and fired Schlag in inverted pose.

BOOOOM!

One explosive sound rang out. However, the fired masses of killing intent were four. The Magma Serpents, who were attacking from right and left with tremendous momentum didn't have any chance to be confused from the suddenly disappearing prey. They were attacked by the impact coming from above thus had its magma bodies dispersed, exposing the core, the magic stone.

At the same time, two flashes of light were fired from Donner and shot through the two magic stone without even one millimeter of error.

If one looked, the crystals regularly buried on the outer circumference of the rockwall of the middle island mostly emitted light, only eight haven't. That was done even though not that much time passed since the real fight begun.

If Hajime's party's guess, where «Guryuu-en Great Volcano»'s concept was for a prolonged battle while having one's

concentration down due to nasty environment, was right, then the expectation of the creator of this trial could be said as completely off the mark because they were Hajime and his party.

Tio's Breath destroyed more Magma Serpents

— Six left.

Shia used a blow from Doryukken and at the same time fired the slug bullet into another Magma Serpent, blasting them.

— Four left.

Two Magma Serpent were trying to do a pincer attack on Yue, ambushing from below where the ocean of magma. However, above them was "Thunder Dragon" coiling around Yue, obstructing them thus it became a standstill. Following that, the two Magma Serpents were now attacked by four "Thunder Dragons" from both of their sides, and were devoured.

— Two left.

A Magma Serpent was rapidly charging at Hajime while scattering bullet-like masses of magma. However, Hajime was swaying like a dancing falling leaf and avoided the masses of magma. When he was about to be devoured by the Magma Serpent, he fired Schlag and they passed through each other. The serpent blown away while the inertia made the magic stone jumped out which then sniped by

Donner and Hajime didn't even need to look at it.

Finally, the last Magma Serpent was surprise attacking from the ocean of magma below. Hajime flew up using "Aerodynamic" and fired Schlag, towards the interior of the opened mouth of Magma Serpent coming from below.

At the moment of impact, red shockwave scattered the magma. The gap created slightly revealed the magic stone. Hajime poised the Donner in his right hand. When he was about to fire the last attack, he watched Yue and the girl's satisfied looks.

"This is the end."

Looking at it in the edge of his vision, Hajime fired the last attack for the sake of conquering «Guryuu-en Great Volcano».

— And at that moment.

FUUUUWIIIIIISHHHHH

A beam poured down from above.

The light looked like divine punishment shot from the heaven, was the light that mortally injured Hajime before. No, it might be far stronger than that. The attack even made the air screamed was fired, aiming at the time of battle where Hajime most wide opened

— swallowing Hajime along with the last Magma Serpent.

Arifureta: Volume 9 Chapter 8

Chapter 88 of the Web Novel.

The User of Age of Gods Magic

Without any warning, the white beam suddenly shot down from the heavens.

The light attacked Hajime with a perfect timing; when he was about to finish the last Magma Serpent. Thus, Hajime was swallowed by a destructive storm carrying fierce heat and impact.

“Ha-Hajimee!!!”

Yue’s scream rang out. Slightly away from Hajime, Shia and Tio could only watched Hajime being swallowed by the beam absentmindedly, only to regain their senses when they heard Yue’s sorrowful scream they never heard even once ever since they met.

Pouring down from right above Hajime, the beam also swallowed the last Magma Serpent and reached the scorching sea, grandly blowing away the surrounding away, and temporarily disclosing the bottom of the magma sea. The beam kept piercing the sea of magma for a while, but gradually became thinner and thinner before finally disappearing as if merging with the air.

Yue, who frantically jumped to where Hajime was, Hajime

appeared from the disappearing light and was floating in the air, even though he had become tattered. However, having crossed his arms to protect his chest and face, Hajime immediately lost his balance and began to fall towards the rampaging sea of magma because of the beam's impact.

"Kh! "Soar"!"

Thinking Hajime had lost his consciousness; Yue used magic to stop Hajime from falling on his back. Using this chance, she hugged Hajime and they landed in the nearby foothold.

"Kh! Hajime! Hajime!"

Maximum uneasiness could be seen on Yue's face while she made Hajime drink the holy water she took out. Hajime's condition was quite miserable. His right arm was burnt so badly that even the bone could be seen, while his artificial arm half melted. His eyepatch was blown off and blood kept flowing from the deep wound on his cheek. Furthermore, his abdomen was burnt black, carbonized. Even so, as a proof of his growth, his internal organs weren't damaged.

At that time, in the moment the beam was about to swallow Hajime, he twisted his body to face the beam by a hair-breadth and used "Concentrated Strengthening" and "Strength Endowment," derivations from "Vajra." Thanks to that, his head was defended by the reinforced artificial arm while his heart and lungs were protected by his right arm and Donner. The clothing around his belly, made from a special demonic beast's leather, had its defense raised further by "Strength Endowment," Hajime himself had an abnormal magic resistance, so there was no danger to his life but…

“Nh… recovery is too slow!”

Apparent with Yue irritated mutter, the recovery using holy water didn’t advanced much. Thus, Yue gritted her teeth.

Previously, Hajime had been burnt and collapsed after receiving the beam attack to protect Yue during the fight against the hydra in «Orcus Great Dungeon»’s last trial. Thus, Yue didn’t want to see it again, and she vowed to never let Hajime experienced such a thing again. However, the spectacle of Hajime being swallowed by the beam and collapsed powerlessly was just like the reproduction of that time. It made Yue’s normally expressionless face warped from regret.

And at that moment,

“Fools! Above thee!!”

Tio warned and at the same time, numerous flashes poured down. These were small version of the beam. Each had the power and scale of a tenth of the previous beam, but each of light of death could surely destroy one’s body.

However, Yue hadn’t notice the incoming flashes above because she was occupied with making Hajime drink the second vial of holy water. It was a situation where Yue’s magic wouldn’t make it in time since she had only looked up now because of the warning. In another three seconds, no, one second… between the time it felt

like it enlarged, Yue desperately constructed a defense magic in her head.

“Won’t let thee! “Tempest Void”!”

Tio let Yue earned another few seconds. “Tempest Void,” was a mid-ranked defense magic of wind element. The wall of compressed air received the rain of death. The barrier of wind bent greatly at the moment of impact. Normally, the attack would bounce back, but there was no chance to do that. The mini-beams hitting one after another made the air shrieked. The time it could be intercepted was truly only a few seconds.

However, that was enough.

“”Divine Interruption”!”

Yue’s defense magic activated. Normally, she would use “Absolute Calamity,” but the time shortened to activate it wasn’t much even though she had become more skilled in using it. It was because the time to construct and activate gravity magic couldn’t be compared to magic of other attributes. Thus she decided to use “Divine Interruption,” the best defense magic she could immediately activate.

Barrier of light that shone brilliantly appeared before Yue’s thrust out hand, covering Yue and the unconscious Hajime in semi-sphere. In addition, the “Tempest Void” activated by Tio was finally unable to endure the storm of mini-beams, and collapsed accompanied by sound of air being ripped. At the same time, the

non-declining torrent of destruction poured into the barrier of light below it.

WOOOOOOSSSHHHH!!!

The huge waterfall-like pressure didn't annihilate Hajime and Yue, but it continued to attack them. Yue's "Divine Interruption" cracked. Judging it would be bad after receiving more force than she imagined, Yue transformed the all-covering barrier into a shield that only covered overhead in the middle of its activation. The strength increased conversely to the range it covered.

The surroundings were destroyed by the mini-beams and parts of the foothold other than where Yue and Hajime were, already sunk into the sea of magma.

These mini-beams stubbornly aimed at Hajime, they didn't even pouring at the nearby footholds where Shia and Tio were to halt them. However, Shia and Tio were forced to stay where they were because the power and density of barrage from the mini-beams were that abnormal.

"Hajime-san! Hajime-saan!"

"Calm down, Shia! Thou willth die if thou come out of this one's protection!"

"But! Hajime-san is-!"

Tio frantically admonished Shia, who tried to dash into the downpour of mini-beams with tearful look while she moved the shield of swirling wind.

Tio was also worried about Hajime. She understood how painful it was for Shia. However, they mustn't defenselessly charge into the minimized version of the attack that had severely injured Hajime, and had an effect of weakening the recovery rate of holy water. Gripping Shia by the scruff of her neck, Tio desperately averted the threatening lights.

After ten seconds or maybe one minute… the storm of beams that seemed to continue through the eternity, poured down particularly intense, and the end finally could be seen. The surroundings were in miserable condition, and white smokes were rising here and there.

Yue and Tio had used up their magic power. Panting, they refilled their magic power using the magic power stocked inside Magic-Crystallization stones.

And at the same time, a man's voice that was half-amazed and half-admiring descended from the sky.

"… A force that cannot be overlooked; indeed it was the right thing to ambush here. You are all too dangerous. Especially, that man…"

Yue and the girls looked up towards the ceiling where the voice

came from. Following that, their eyes opened wide in astonishment. As for the reason, several dragons and a pure white, gigantic dragon that couldn't be compared to the rest were flying, and there was a red-haired, black-skinned, slightly pointed ear, a man from Demon race on the white dragon's back.

"For the Breath of my white dragon to be incapable of killing him… and in addition, he had strong unknown weapons not written in the report… these women, too. It is truly unbelievable for you to not be finished with a barrage of 50 Ash Dragons. You, just what are you? Just how many Age of Gods magic do you have?"

The man was glaring from the sky with his dangerously narrowed golden eyes, similar to Tio's. He asked that question while being cautious of Yue and the others who glared back at him. He thought Yue and the girls' power came from Age of Gods magic from the Great Dungeons.

"Before questioning, how about you introduce yourself first? Does the Demon race have no manners?"

The one who answered the Demon race man was the previously unconscious Hajime. The Demon race man frowned. However, Yue and the girls' voice rang out before the man even opened his mouth.

"Hajime!"

"Hajime-san!"

“Art thou okay!? Master!?”

Hajime somehow managed to raise his upper body, but he once again fell because his injury was indeed severe. Yue promptly supported him while Shia and Tio jumped from the nearby foothold to where Hajime was, worried.

Hajime smiled to tell Yue and the girls, who were worriedly looking at him, that he was alright, and stood up by himself. However, he wasn’t in a condition where he would be able to immediately fight. This was displayed by his forehead drenched in sweat due to sharp pains he felt. Even so, Hajime moved his gaze from Yue and the girls towards the Demon race in the sky, and was showing a fearless smile.

“… There’s no need to introduce myself to those who will die soon.”

“Same here. I am asking just because it was normal to ask. I am not interested either, so don’t mind it. By the way, how’s your friend’s arm?”

Hajime asked as if to ridicule to stall for time for his recovery. The Demon race man had said “report” and “ambush,” so Hajime recalled the Demon race who was behind the scene inside the town of Ul, whose arm blown off and got away with his life. Thus, his information might have come from there.

With his eyebrow twitching for an instant, the Demon race man answered with tone somewhat lowered than before.

“I change my mind. Bury this name of mine into your flesh and bones. My name is Freed Baghuar. A God’s Apostle who will give divine punishment to the heretics.”

“God’s Apostle… I see. How exaggerated. Were you allowed to introduce yourself as that because you obtain the Age of Gods magic? It wasn’t the kind of magic that control the demonic beasts, right? …Although the demonic beasts fired the beams, they seemed to do it at their own discretion. So, it must be a magic that created demonic beast, right? Of course, those who can create a matchless army can introduce themselves as God’s Apostle, heh.”

“That’s right. For “Alv-sama,” who had obtained God’s powers, told to me directly, “My apostle.” Therefore, all of my being is devoted to realize my master’s wish. Thus, I will use my all to deny you, whose existences will only be an obstacle.”

Closely resembling Ishtal of Church of the Saints, the Demon race man, Freed Baghuar, was denying the existences of Hajime’s party up front. However, Hajime fearlessly laughed with fierce denial. Though his recovery rate was slow, Hajime had used “Recovery” derived from “Magic Conversion” to change his magic power into recovery, and his bleeding had stopped. Though he could not use his left arm, it was possible for him to use his unbroken right arm even if the bone could be seen. Hajime psyched, “I can still fight!”

“That’s my line. Those who obstruct me are enemies. And I will… kill my enemies!”

After shouting so, Hajime endured the sharp pain to aim Donner at Freed and pulled the trigger. He held down his screaming right arm and body due to recoil, and used killing intent aimed at his enemies. Furthermore, he activated “Light Speed” and took out Cross Bits to attack. At the same time, Yue’s “Thunder Dragon”, Tio’s Breath, and Shia’s exploding-slug bullet fired.

However, when several of the 3-4 meters long Ash Dragons entered the attack trajectories, numerous piled up, triangular, reddish black barriers immediately appeared and received all of the attacks from Hajime’s party.

The barrier that received the force of Hajime’s party’s attack and didn’t even held on for a few seconds before it cracked, but more Ash Dragons came from behind and piled up another similar barriers, and thus it wasn’t possible to break through. When they looked carefully, there were turtle-shaped demonic beasts on the dragons’ back. Their shells were shining in reddish black, so these turtle-shaped demonic beasts were most likely the ones that activated the barriers.

“Did you think I only brought along these dragon-type demonic beasts? You wouldn’t be able to easily break through their defense, you know. Well then, I will show you. I will show the other power I had obtained — the power of Gods!”

Freed began to focus and recited the chant in mutter. On his hand, there was a large fabric where complex and bizarre magic array was drawn. According to what he said, it was another power of Gods. He probably meant the Age of Gods magic he obtained in this «Guryuu-en Great Volcano». Knowing the great effect of an Age

of Gods magic, Hajime's party began to attack furiously, to not let him finished his chant.

However, once they broke through the barrier of the Ash Dragons, a new barrier would immediately activated behind the previous one, thus their attacks could not reach Freed. Normally, Hajime would've asked Yue and the other two to cover him and go forward using "Aerodynamic," but he still haven't completely healed, so it would be difficult for him to beat the group of Ash Dragons. Thinking so, Hajime grinded his teeth.

Hajime put away Donner, and fired all ammos of Orkan whose recoil was small, but they only blew away several of the Ash Dragons' barriers, that's all. They weren't able to reach Freed. Even the Cross Bits that had quite the power couldn't completely destroy all of the barriers.

And the time was up. Freed finished his chant.

""Boundary Piercer.""

"Kh! Behind you! Hajime-san!"

At the same time as the last letter of the magic's name was said, Freed and the white dragon disappeared. More accurately, shining membrane-like thing appeared and they jumped inside. The time Freed said the magic's name and Shia's warning were the same, so Hajime's party, without having time to be wide eyed from astonishment, turned their heads around.

There was… right before Hajime a white dragon's whitely opened mouth and Freed on top of it, aiming at Hajime. Inside the dragon's mouth were extreme heat and magic power which concentrated and compressed until the limit. Hajime immediately used Orkan as a shield and at the same time, the beam was fired from zero distance.

BOoOoOoOoOOOM

"Ghh!! AaAAAH!!"

Accompanied by a roaring sound, the held up Orkan was hit by the beam and Hajime was blown away. The severe impact and the damage made his flesh screamed, and Hajime raised an agonized groan from his clenched mouth.

"Hajime!"

Wanting to help Hajime who was blown away by the beam, Yue and the girls immediately tried to attack the white dragon, but the Ash Dragons attacked in a barrage as if they knew what the girls would do.

While he didn't receive a direct hit from the beam, the impact from being blown away made Hajime's wound reopened, and his blood sprayed. Hajime was desperately holding Orkan with his wounded right arm and braced himself using "Aerodynamic." Then, thinking he would be dropped into the boiling sea if this keeps up, Hajime

activated “Limit Break.”

It was a dangerous bet to activate “Limit Break” with a wounded body. Normally, he would only be exhausted after using “Limit Break,” but with his current condition, he would likely to become paralyzed afterward. Even so, Hajime judged that using it was indeed necessary to break through this situation.

Hajime’s body wrapped inside a torrent shining brightly red, his power swelled up explosively.

“RAaAAA!!”

Roaring, he slanted Orkan to forcibly avert the beam up. Even so, he could not completely avert it, and he was blown away while spouting blood because of the beam.

The white dragon continued attacking by firing numerous light bullets which was the same as Hydra’s. However, the dragon’s beam was far tougher than the hydra, so the light bullets also couldn’t be underestimated. Furthermore, its combination with a user of Age of Gods magic made it extremely troublesome.

“Cross Bitt!”

With the incoming light bullets, Hajime concentrated to his limit, entering the slowed down world and was evading like a swaying fallen leaf. Following that, he put away Orkan that had become

useless because it had melted, and fired Donner, while also making the Cross Bit fly to assault Freed at the same time.

“How tenacious! To dodge a decisive blow by a hair-breadth-!”

Covered again by the barrier of the turtle-shaped demonic beast, Freed was grinding his teeth as he watched the seriously wounded Hajime’s tenacity in wonder. Then, he once again begin to recite the chant while the white dragon flew at high speed.

“This one won’t let you!”

Towards Freed and the white dragon who endured the fierce attack from the Cross Bits while firing the light bullets and backing away from Hajime to regain time to finish the chant, a mysterious voice suddenly resounded in the entire space. At the same time, they were attacked by a terrific impact from the flank.

Blown away, Freed stopped his chant and instinctively clung to the white dragon. He then looked at the one who blew away the ten meters long white dragon. He opened his eyes wide in astonishment.

“Black dragon!?”

“It seemth thou hath forgotten thy place and got carried away! This one won’t let you hurt Master anymore!”

The one who blew Freed and the white dragon away was the “Dragonformed” Tio. Having accepted the risk that the Demon race would know about the Ryuujin race, Tio demonstrated her appearance. And even though she was one size smaller than the white dragon, her pressure far surpassed the white dragon.

The reason Tio decided to join Hajime’s party on their journey was because she came to like Hajime, but also to observe the people who came from another world, and to find what her future move would be. With that, she wanted to conceal that she came from Ryuujin tribe. It was also her race’s law, so she naturally would do that. After all, no matter how strong her race was, they wouldn’t be able to fight against number. It was something that permeated inside their people from the persecution 500 years ago.

However, Hajime, who she was convinced to be invincible and could not be injured, had sustained severe injuries. Thus, when she saw Hajime had powerlessly collapsed because of the beam pouring down from the above, Tio’s mind was attacked by fierce agitation.

She thought she had misunderstood something. Hajime is a human. If wounded in a moment of carelessness, it was possible for him to easily die. Tio gradually recalled this, and her, who had forgotten common sense due to her long life, was now clearly conscious of her feeling thank to her devotion towards Hajime. He was an object of her interest, but not as her Master. She understood now that Hajime was a “man” that she, as a woman, did not want to lose.

Therefore, she decided to “Dragonform” in front of others. She wouldn’t be able to puff her chest and call them comrades if she

was unwilling to do it in this crisis. Above all, the pride of Tio Clarce of Ryuujin race would not allow her to choose the law above her important person's life, neither could she do that.

"Young one! Remember this! This is the "Dragon"'s Breath!"

ROooOOOOooOaaaAAR

Accompanied with a roaring sound, a black flash immediately came to swallow the white dragon along with Freed. The white dragon twisted its body and fired its Breath beam towards the incoming Breath. Black and white flashes collided, scattering violent shock wave. The ocean of magma right below, centered on the colliding point, was rampaging and generating gigantic tsunamis of magma.

At first, Tio and the white dragon's Breaths were equal, but Tio's Breath began to gradually push the white dragon's.

"Kuh, for me to meet a survivor of Ryuujin race here… there's no other way. Although it is risky, I will use magic to make the space…"

"Do you think I will let you?!"

"Kh!?"

Maybe because he didn't have any report about the Ryuujin race, Freed was truly surprised. Seeing this situation, he gritted his teeth, took out another fabric from his pocket, and tried to chant the Age of Gods magic again.

However, he was interrupted by the impact followed a voice behind him.

It was Hajime who arrived behind Freed, unbeknownst to him, and fired Donner in succession while blood was spouted from his wounds. Six bullets were fired with one firing sound. All of the bullets, without deviating even a millimeter, were hitting the same place.

The turtle-shaped demonic beast by Freed's side had activated the barrier faster than Freed could react, but once impacted in almost zero distance by the flashes; the barrier shining in reddish black was easily smashed. Following that, Hajime slipped into the bosom of Freed who displayed his irritation and panicked.

Activating "Wind Claw" on Donner, Hajime swung it at once.

"Guaah!?"

By a hair's breadth, Freed escaped from being cut in two by falling behind. However, a horizontally slashed wound was carved on his chest. Hajime didn't stop his attack, rotating using the momentum from slashing Freed, he activated "Magic Shockwave" from "Magic Power Conversion" and back kicked Freed.

BAAAM!

“GAaAHH!!”

Freed barely guarded using his left arm, but he could not kill the momentum, and thus his left arm was crushed and his organs were damaged. Freed was horizontally blown away from the white dragon.

Noticing his master’s disappearance, the white dragon lost its concentration and the black Breath approached it in a dash. Immediately after Hajime jumped off the white dragon, Tio’s Breath grandly blew off the beam along with the white dragon.

“Roarrrr!!”

Screaming as it was being blown away, the white dragon somehow managed to regain its balance mid-air even after its belly received the attack from Tio’s Breath, and it immediately flew towards the ceiling. Once again, Freed was on the back of an Ash Dragon with Freed. Reunited in the air, Freed once again boarded the white dragon.

Hajime tried to pursue using “Aerodynamic,” however…

“Gh!? Gahakh!!”

The bright red light enveloping Hajime was disappearing rapidly, and not only from his wounds, but he also vomited a large amount of blood. His “Limit Break” had reached the time limit. In his wounded condition, the damage was further deepened from breaking his limit, and thus the time limit came earlier. Hajime was falling into the ocean of magma because his “Aerodynamic” was deactivated.

“Master! Hold on!”

“Guh, Ti-Tio…”

Tio flew to put the falling Hajime on her back. Hajime, whose damage deepened from “Limit Break”‘s after effect and should have collapsed, managed to somehow get into kneeling position and his eyes shone as he glared at Freed above.

From what he saw, even the Ash Dragons that were attacking Yue and the girls had gathered by Freed’s side.

“Hajime!”

“Hajime-san!”

Shouting Hajime’s name, Yue and Shia came running. Tio landed in the nearby foothold. She did it because the possibility of the

current Hajime not being able to endure Tio's battling movement and fall was high. Having jumped onto the same foothold, Yue and Shia immediately came to Hajime's side and supported his body.

"… What a dreadful force. Those women are also not normal. A Ryuujin race that should have been annihilated, no-chant no-array using magic-user, and a Rabbitman tribe with unexpected power and ability to see the future… They are also possibly users of Age of Gods magic. And to have cornered me now… it would have been my side that would have gotten beaten if I didn't first attack, huh…"

Squeezing his words, Freed was exchanging gaze with Hajime, creating sparks. Panting, Freed touch the wound carved on his chest with his unhurt right hand.

"Why are you assuming this is the end? I can still fight."

Hajime's expression turned ugly because of Freed's words. But even with his tattered body, Hajime's eyes were shining with killing intent while he declared the battle to continue.

"… Of course. The torrent of killing intent overflowing from you expressed you would not give up no matter how wounded you are. Not only do you have dreadful powers, you also have killing intent that could devour your enemy… No, was it the attachment to survive…"

Guessing once, then Freed made a resolute expression and glared at Hajime again.

“I don’t want to use this method… but it is necessary to use it if it can kill powerful enemies like you.”

“What did you say?”

Not answering Hajime’s question, Freed said something to the small bird-shaped demonic beast, unknown as to when it landed on his shoulder.

Then,

RUMBLE, RUMBLE, RUMBLE, RUMBLE, RUMBLE, RUMBLE, RUMBLE, RUMBLE, RUMBLE!

SPLASH!

KABOOM!

Great tremor shook the entire space, no, the entire «Guryuu-en Great Volcano», and the ocean of magma began to rampaging, accompanied with a terrific, roaring sound.

“Uoh!?”

“Nnah!?”

“Kyaa!?”

“Nuoh!?”

Suffering from the sudden shockwave from below, Hajime’s party got on all fours and screamed, while desperately trying to balance themselves. The great tremor was gradually becoming even more intense, and could be said to reach seven in the richter scale. From the ocean of magma, numerous fire pillars, no, magma pillars began to spout.

“Hajime-san! The magma level-!”

With Shia’s words, the magma surrounding the foothold, where Hajime’s party were, was indeed rising in level.

“What did he do?”

Hajime squeezed his words and asked the obvious culprit behind this situation, Freed. Having moved to the ceiling above the middle island, Freed answered the question.

“I only destroyed the keystone.”

“Key… stone?”

“That’s right. Didn’t you think it was strange when you saw the magma? «Guryuu-en Great Volcano» is obviously an active volcano. However, there’s no record of it erupting until now. What I mean, is there must be something controlling the activity of the underground magma reservoir.”

“That’s the “keystone,” huh… Don’t tell me!?”

“It is. I have destroyed the gigantic keystone that calmed down the magma reservoir. Thus, this Great Dungeon will soon be destroyed. And although I deeply regret that I can’t give my kins the Age of Gods magic of this dungeon… it isn’t that regrettable if it means I can kill you here. Be destroyed along with this Great Dungeon.”

Coldly looking down at Hajime’s party, Freed held a pendant on his neck towards the ceiling. Then, the crack on the ceiling began to be open. Along with the circular hole on the ceiling, several doors above it also opened.

Apparently, Freed had opened the shortcut to the outside using the proof of having conquered «Guryuu-en Great Volcano». For the last time, Freed glared at Hajime’s party then turned on his heel along with the white dragon, disappearing into the passage on the ceiling.

With the surrounding magma rampaged like the sea influenced by a hurricane, the number of spouted magma pillars kept increasing. The magma began to swallow the edges of the foothold where

Hajime's party were. It was a spectacle worthy to be called the end of world.

In a short while, Hajime closed his eyes and was thinking of something. Having decided on something, he stood up despite his injury. Immediately, the Ash Dragons left behind by Freed and the white dragon began to simultaneously fire small beams. They seem to want to kill Hajime's party here by all means.

While Yue was intercepting the small beam attacks using "Absolute Calamity," Hajime put his hand on the "Treasure Box." Then, he put his hand on the hard dragon scale covering Tio's cheeck, who was firing Breath towards the Ash Dragons overhead, to make her face him.

"Tio, listen. Take this and you alone must escape from that ceiling to the outside."

For a moment, Tio was blinking, not understanding what was said. Then, she realized it in the next moment and raised a voice which mixed with sadness and anger. Hajime's words were as if telling her to let herself survived, casting him and the other two away.

"Master, is this one, is this one not worth spending the last time with thee? Art thou discarding this one? This one…"

"That's not it, Tio. I will say it just once because there's not much time left. I am not giving up anything at all. I will get the Age of Gods magic and I will someday beat that bastard. Also, I am going to fulfil my promise to bring back the "Serene stone." However, it

is impossible to do it alone. That's why I want you to lend me your power. If it is not you, it is impossible to break through everything and return to Ancadi… Please, Tio."

Hajime looked at the dragonformed Tio with a serious gaze he had never looked at her with before. With his pride and arrogance, Hajime had said he would be able to do anything by himself, but he relied on her. Expressing he needed Tio's cooperation to accomplish his wishes, and to overcome all of the difficulties. He said he needed Tio's power. There was neither trace of him giving up, trying to sacrifice himself, nor was he excluding Tio at all.

The sadness and anger in Tio's heart changed radically into one of joy as she trembled. She was "entrusted" with something important by the man she liked, no, the one she wanted to be her partner in this life and death situation. She would not be a woman if she didn't answer him.

Therefore, Tio only answered with one sentence.

"Leave it to this one!"

Hajime put "Treasure Box" in the inner part of Tio's scale. Doing so, he was directly touching the Tio's body while she was in her dragon form.

Confirming the "Treasure Box" with her skin, Tio quietly rubbed her head against Hajime. It was the best expression of love she could do now. Hajime also gently stroked Tio once before he parted. Tio turned her gaze to Yue and Shia. Then, she nodded

powerfully having felt that the two also haven't given up.

"Tio, deliver this message to Kaori and Myuu. "I will meet you later." Okay."

"Fufu, acknowledged."

The too nonchalant message Hajime gave made Tio laugh inadvertently, and after a beat, she flew at once while cladded by a powerful wind. Using barrelroll to evade the incoming small beams, Tio immediately tried to pierce through the group of Ash Dragons. The Ash Dragons, sensing the crisis from the black dragon's movement, concentrated their attacks on Tio.

The rushing small beams were counterbalanced by Tio's Breath, but it wasn't easy because the beams keep coming one after another. However, the moment the balance about to collapse, a beam gushed out from below and blew several Ash Dragons that were attacking Tio.

It was the small beams compressed and fired by Yue's "Absolute Calamity." In addition, exploding-slug bullets were fired and the shock wave blew the Ash Dragons away.

Suddenly, maybe because Freed and the white dragon had reached outside, the doors on the ceiling began to close. Realizing she didn't have much time, Tio focused on accelerating with resolution of receiving the bombardment. Tio's flight speed was further increased, but the fired off small beams began to break Tio's dragon scale.

“Hmph, a pain only of this degree, it feels good! Bring it on~!”

Just as she said, Tio’s mood brightened along with the increment of her speed whenever the attack from the Ash Dragons damaged her body. It was the effect of “Pain Conversion” in “Dragonform.” The more pain she felt, the more her tension increased along with temporary boost of her ability, an awful skill derivation. Incidentally, it was something she obtained when she met Hajime after living for several hundreds of years. So, rather than “breaking through the wall (as in the wall before the skill derived),” it was more like “the door had opened.”

With the Ash Dragons somewhat taken aback, Tio passed through the storm of small beams and passed through the door right before it closed. Looking above, a small, nostalgic light could be seen. It was the light of the outside. There were still several doors that had begun to close one by one.

Without thinking about the consequence, Tio used her magic, except some that would be used to maintain “Dragonform,” to the limit and manipulated the wind. Recalling the long life she had, it was a speed she had never use before. She literally flew, turning into a gale.

She passed through one door, two doors, three doors, and she finally arrived at the last door; a thick door connected to the outside. Tio was going forward while surrounded by black wind like a cannonball. And light bullets attacked her from above.

Apparently, Freed and the white dragon had noticed Tio, and thus

they stopped to attack her. Now, more than half of the door had been closed. Rotating while evading, Tio didn't lower her speed even if she could not evade the bombardment, and the white dragon fired off the beam.

Exhausted of its magic power, the beam didn't have the force it had in the beginning. It was only half of its usual power at best. However, the damage, if Tio was hit by it, would still surpass the one she received from the small beams. Furthermore, her speed would fall if she evade or intercept it. If so, she might not make it in time before the door closed.

Tio steeled herself, and she further raised her speed using "Pain Conversion" right after the bombardment of the light bullets.

And at that time, several shadows passed through Tio's side, appearing in between Tio and the incoming beam.

They were things Tio knew just by seeing. The floating crosses, all-ranged weapons, Hajime's Cross Bits. They had followed right behind Tio.

The three Cross Bits that came out were clad in bright red light, tried to change the angle of the beam, and averted it to the side. Although they were destroyed one after another by the force of the beam, they had interrupted the beam and protected Tio. Furthermore, another four Cross Bits flew to Tio's side to protect her.

"Nuhaa~, can't hold it! Masterrr, this one love you~!"

Even though he might get overcome by the torrent of magma, Hajime had still controlled all of the Cross Bits from the ground to protect Tio. Thus, Tio roared towards the world, shouting her love. Being especially strong even amongst the Ryuujin tribe, Tio had never been protected by a man up until now. It was always her who did the protection. That's why, the fact that she was protected during such an extremely difficult situation made her exploded in joy from the sensation she had never felt.

"Guuroarrr!!!"

With a dragon's roar, she passed through the last door. Having turned into a mass of black wind, Tio flew out vertically, dancing under the sunlight that poured down surrounded by the gigantic sandstorm.

"For the situation to turn out like this…-! What a monster! But that black dragon is covered in wounds. I will kil-!?"

Tio who flew overhead made Freed on the white dragon astonished, but he immediately sharpened his gaze and tried to attack. However, his plan and words were interrupted. The four Cross Bits had surrounded Freed and the white dragon from all directions before they were aware of them.

Freed made the turtle-shaped demonic beast he took during his escape to promptly put up a barrier. After all, it had been proven that the Cross Bit's offensive power could not destroy the barrier. And although the result might have been different if they were loaded with explosive bullets, the exploding-slug bullets in Shia's

ranged attack were scarce, and Hajime had given priority to the bullets on Donner-Schlag, thus he had no time to implement it on the Cross Bits.

However, the Cross Bits have one more powerful attack method. This method made Freed's composed expression freeze, proven by how he was blown away along with the white dragon after receiving a huge damage.

KABOOOOOOM!

When thinking it was odd the Cross Bits didn't shoot and abruptly shined red, but in the next moment, they exploded.

The four Cross Bits had been positioned in all sides to not let their targets escaped from the impact. The grand, powerful impact and the bullets that scattered like a storm easily destroyed the barrier, attacking Freed and the white dragon.

"GAaAAH!!"

"RUaAAAAn!!"

The master and servant were mutually screaming as they were blown away.

In addition, Tio attacked with tornado, pushing Freed and the

white dragon into the sandstorm. Tio had wanted to shoot out Breath to kill them for sure, but she could not because she didn't have much strength left.

Tio watched the place where Freed and the white dragon had disappeared for a while, then she moved her gaze after she to confirm there's no change at all. She quietly watched the «Guryuu-en Great Volcano» before her without even a trace of her perverted tension remaining. Next, nodding as if expressing "This one will believe in thee," she turned around and flew towards Ancadi.

After several tens of minutes, a great earthquake with «Guryuu-en Great Volcano» as the epicentre, with sounds surpassing roaring sounds, a great explosion occurred that even cracked the atmosphere, and temporarily blew off the sandstorm. Black, black smoke rose from «Guryuu-en Great Volcano» while scorching rocks went flying, and sparks scattered from the volcano.

It was a great eruption of «Guryuu-en Great Volcano» that was recorded to have never erupted in history. In a way, it was a historical moment. After a few minutes, the volcano was once again wrapped with a veil of gigantic sandstorm, concealing its bizarreness.

Even so, the roaring sound that seemed to be the scream of the world along with the spouted black smoke was certainly seen by the people of Ancadi. Their uneasiness grew stronger. It was also felt by the girl and little girl who were waiting for their important people to return.

Arifureta: Volume 9 Chapter 9

Chapter 89 of the Web Novel.

Inside the Scorching Heat

“… Self-destruction is a man’s romance.”

“? … Hajime?”

“Hajime-san?”

Hajime who suddenly muttered with a grin while the small beams poured from above, made Yue and Shia looked at him with dubious expressions. Shaking his head to tell them it was nothing, Hajime was supported by the two and somehow managed to jump and arrived at the edge of the middle island.

The surrounding magma had become more and more rampaging since the time Tio flew away, and there was no other foothold except the middle island. The middle island would also be swallowed in less than five minutes.

Yue swallowed the pouring down small beams using “Absolute Calamity” while Shia swung down Doryukken at the Ash Dragons, who became impatient and came to directly attack them, making them fell into the magma. Already ten of Ash Dragons were defeated.

The magma dome they saw in the beginning above the middle island had already disappeared, and they could see a jet-black building in exchange. Nearby the building was a disk floating a few centimeters above the ground. It might be the thing normally used to get out from the shortcut that allowed the ceiling to open earlier.

Leering at the Ash Dragons desperately trying to dodge the magma pillars gushing out and attacking them, Hajime's party approached the jet-black building.

At a glance, it only looked like a tall building without any door, but a part of the wall had the same crests of the Seven Great Dungeons carved in. Standing before that part of wall, the wall soundlessly slid and the party entered the building. The party entered the building at the same time the magma flowed, swallowing the middle island. Once again, the door closed soundlessly and halted the magma from flowing inside within a hair's breadth.

After watching the door for a while and seeing the door didn't melt nor were there any magma flowing inside, Hajime's party breathe sighs of relief. They had expected the dwelling to be built here and have prepared for such a case. Thus, the result was a relief.

"We are safe for the time being… Even so, for this room to even intercepted the vibration…"

"Nn… Hajime, over there."

“A magic circle.”

As soon as he entered the room, Hajime was surprised from not feeling the major tremor. Responding to his mutter, Yue, who was by his side, pointed her finger. The thing she pointed at was a complex and exquisite magic formation. The magic array for Age of Gods Magic. The party nodded at each other and came into the formation.

Just like the time in «Orcus Great Dungeon», their memories flowed out without permission, tracking how they conquered the dungeon. Thus, after it was confirmed that they conquered it from subjugating all of the Magma Serpents, the Age of Gods magic was directly carved into their brains.

“… I see, this is Spatial Magic.”

“… The seed for instant movement.”

“Ahh, just like that guy who suddenly appeared from behind, right.”

Apparently, the Age of Gods Magic resided in «Guryuu-en Great Volcano» was “Spatial Magic.” Another magic that could interfere with an unexpected thing. As usual, the magic at the Age of Gods was far from being normal.

Yue was referring to Freed's surprise attack. The very first surprise attack was likely to appear from above using the Spatial magic. Although she didn't understand whether he teleported or just distorted the space to hide, it didn't change the fact that it was troublesome. Even his second surprise attack would have hit Hajime if not for Shia's "Decided Future," derived from "Foresight." A fine play.

At the same time Hajime's party mastered the Spatial magic, the light from magic formation dimmed and shiiiing, a part of the wall opened and shining letters began to appear on the wall before them.

"I sincerely wish for the free will of the people in the future."

– Naiz Guryuu-en

"… How simple."

Upong seeing the message, that was the impression Hajime had. Seeing the surroundings, he noticed that the dwelling of the founder of «Guryuu-en Great Volcano» was quite dreary. The feeling where someone lived here just like in the dwelling of Orcus couldn't be felt. It was truly a place with nothing but the magic formation.

"… It seems to be his own arrangement."

"Looks like Naiz-san didn't leave anything except the magic."

“Now that I remember it, that Naiz appeared in Oscar’s note. He seemed to be a truly taciturn person.”

With Shia supporting Hajime’s left flank, Yue walked to the wall with fist size opening and took out the pendant from inside. It was similar to the proofs of conquering other dungeons, but the circular pendant had different designs. Yue quietly put in on Hajime’s neck.

“… Now that we have obtained both the magic and proof. Next is how we get out of here.”

“… Does Hajime have any idea?”

“Hajime-san must have an idea, right? The outside is probably had been completely filled with magma, you know?”

Although they told their worries, not a trace of uneasiness could be felt from Yue and Shia. While feeling glad from the two’s trust, Hajime told them his escape plan.

“Of course, we are going to swim inside the magma.”

“… Nn?”

“… Come again?”

The far too insufficient information was too difficult to understand, making Yue and Shia think, “Was his head severely damaged after all?” The two asked again with expressions worrying about Hajime’s head.

“I will explain it properly so please don’t look at me like that. Hmm, actually, I have prepared a submarine that can be used immediately after we get out of this building. It is something I created because I thought it was necessary for the «Meljeene, Bottom of the Sea Ruin». Honestly, I was a little worried whether it could endure the magma, but that small boat was okay after being cladded with Vajra, so I tried it myself. And as expected, it looks like it will be okay.”

“Ju-just when in the world did you make that…” Shia spoke in amazement, and amazement could also be seen in Yue’s eyes.

Actually, at the time Freed said he destroyed the keystone, Hajime had directly transferred the submarine from “Treasure Box” into the magma. He had thought of forcibly breaking through the ceiling along with Tio if it melted. But since it didn’t melt (using induction stone), he knew they would be able to escape even if the space was filled with magma.

However, because the scale of the tremor of the «Guryuu-en Great Volcano» was obviously a dangerous one, along with the things collapsing all over the place, they would likely to be incapable of escaping smoothly. Thus, with the time limit approaching for them to return to Ancadi, they didn’t have the time to leisurely looking for the escape route. As such, he decided to let Tio escaped before them. It was so that the “Serene Stone” would be brought back

within the time limit.

“The escape route is of course the shortcut on the ceiling. Yue, I leave the barrier to you until we get into the boarding gate of the submarine. You can do it, right?”

“Nh… leave it to me.”

Nodding at Hajime’s words, Yue concentrated and created triple layers of “Divine Interruption.” The shining barrier covered Hajime’s group of three. The three nodded at each other and stood before the door. Afterwards, the door connected to the outside filled with boiling magma, opened.

Bang! A sound immediately rang out and the scorching torrent of magma flowed into the room. And although “Divine Interruption” indeed protected Hajime’s party from the magma, their views were instantly dyed in crimson. With unbelievable spectacle of seeing magma while being submerged, even though they were prepared, Hajime’s party still found themselves at a loss for words. And although there was a saying “the world is wide,” there probably have been no one but Hajime’s party who have experience such a spectacle.

“It is right outside. Let’s go!”

“Nh.”

“Y-Yes!”

With Hajime’s instructions, the three slowly went outside. And although it was a closed room they didn’t know anything about, just like what Hajime said, upon reaching it with “Divine Interruption,” they immediately stood before a place they understood was the gate. While Yue adjusted the barrier, they arrived right in front of the hatch, and the three were finally able to board on the submarine. And instinctively, Hajime’s party were relaxed.

And at that moment,

DOOORUUUUUUNNNG!!!

A tremor far greater from the ones before now attacked the entire space. The magma suddenly began to flow into one direction with a tremendous momentum. The submarine was swept by the swift current. Inside it, Hajime’s party were as if they were inside a mixer as they keep spinning in all of directions.

“Guwah!?”

“Nnya!?”

“Hau!? It hurts!”

Each of them had their bodies thrown all over the wall and screamed. Yue immediately activated “Absolute Calamity,” used the small, black, swirling orb to pull them, and they somehow managed to get out of the shaker-like situation.

“P-Phew. Thank you, Yue.”

“Thank you very much, Yue-san.”

“Nn… more importantly.”

Yue moved the “Absolute Calamity” and carried Hajime to the place that seemed to be the control seat. Hajime supplied his magic power and tried to control the submarine inside the viscous and intensely flowing magma, but as he thought, the rudder could not be controlled.

“Tch, if it is an eruption then being thrown outside is a lucky thing.”

“… Is there something else?”

Hajime’s bitter expression made Yue tilted her head.

“Ah. I have installed a certain stone just like the one in Cross Bits to lose sight of directions inside the magma. I know the location of the shortcut in the ceiling from the Cross Bits going outside of the

dungeon before they exploded, but… this flow is moving away from the exit.”

“Eh? Does it mean we are diving underground?”

“Yeah, well, rather than diving underground, it is more like it’s moving diagonally… Now then, I wonder where it’s connected to… Yue, Shia. We can’t return immediately after all. There’s nothing we can do except to go with the flow.”

Hajime’s resolute expression made Yue and Shia only relaxed their gaze and quietly drew close to him.

“… I will be by your side until the end. I don’t have any complain as long as that is fulfilled.”

“Fufu… Literally, even if it is inside the fire and the water, eh. Me, too, I will go “anywhere” as long as I can be together with the two of you!”

“… I see. I am the same.”

Hajime relaxed and returned a smile towards the two.

Hajime’s group of three were drawing close to each other inside the submarine while they were swept by the scorching torrent.

* * *

At the time Hajime's party were swept by the magma underground into the unknown after being unable to escape from «Guryuu-en Great Volcano», a shadow was flying unsteadily above the brown, raging sand of «Guryuu-en Great Desert».

Needless to say, it was the "Dragonformed" Tio.

"Ugh… this is rather bad… for the love of, that was a nasty Breath… there's no other way. Master, sorry about this."

Having forcibly broken through, Tio was basked in a large amount of beam whose toxin ended up aggravating her wounds. As such, judging she would be collapsed before she arrived at Ancadi, Tio apologized to Hajime for taking out from "Treasure Box" and crunched the vial of the special potion, the Holy Water, without permission.

Although she had consumed a large amount of magic power from firing Breaths in succession, surpassing her body's limit, and reinforcing her flight ability, she had now considerably recovered. Moreover, even though her wounds didn't instantaneously healed, the toxin had been suppressed.

Afterwards, she flew for several hours and she could finally see Ancadi in her view. If she kept flying any more than this, the people on the watchtower would be able to see Tio's current

appearance. For a moment, Tio wondered whether or not to release her dragon form. However, thinking it would surely be necessary for her to be in her dragonformed while she travels with Hajime, since the Demon race man named Freed was likely to still be alive, she decided to come clean about it.

Also, her hidden town wasn't something that could easily be found. Even if it was found by chance, the Ryuujin race would not go downed that easily. Besides, if it turned into the nightmare (persecution) just like five hundred years ago, Hajime would surely lend Tio his power if she asked for his help. After all, Hajime was sweet to his companion.

While thinking so, she was finally only several kilometers away from Ancadi. From what she could see, the watchtower was in a commotion. Thus, because it would be a hassle to be attacked due to a misunderstanding, Tio made a detour towards the entrance gate and landed slightly away from it.

ZIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIP!

Ancadi's Soldiers moved towards Tio, who landed and created sand dust, with row formation. If one looked above the walls, many Soldiers were standing by with bow or magic array-carved staff in hand.

The sand dust was clearing away. The Soldiers could be heard gulping from nervousness. However, what appeared from the sand was a beautiful, gold-eyed, black-haired woman who looked extremely exhausted, making the soldiers looked at each other in bewilderment.

From among the confused Soldiers, a girl came out. It was a girl whose hair was black like Tio's, Kaori. Behind her, the Soldiers and the Lord's son, Viz, were telling her it was dangerous, but Kaori completely ignored them and she fiercely running towards the kneeling, panting Tio.

Having heard the report from the watchtower and knowing Tio was from Ryuujin race, Kaori had guessed Hajime was returning and ran in a hurry.

"Tio! Are you okay!?"

"Huh, Kaori… ugh, this one is rather okay. This one is just a little tired."

Kaori's expression changed when she saw Tio's body covered in wounds, and looking very exhausted. She immediately knelt nearby Tio's side, and hurriedly examined her condition. When she came to know there was an unknown toxin in Tio's body, she instantly began to activate detoxification and recovery magic at the same time.

"How… for it to not be detoxified…"

However, even the Holy Water needed time to detoxify the beam's toxin. Thus, Kaori's magic was unable to immediately detoxify it. However, although Kaori's face was distorted, Tio had considerably recovered thanks to the effect of the previously taken Holy Water, and Kaori's extraordinary recovery magic. She said to Kaori, "There's no need to worry, it will be detoxified soon," with a smile

as she patted Kaori's head.

Guessing there was indeed nothing to worry about judging by Tio's expression, Kaori relaxed and smiled in relief. Following that, she looked around the surrounding and her expression gradually turned into one of unease.

"Tio… um, what about Hajime-kun and the other two? Is it only you? Also, what was… that eruption…"

"Calm down, Kaori. This one will explain everything. But first, tell the soldiers behind thou to calm down and take this one to a place where we can have a talk."

"Ah, nn, I will."

Only now did Kaori noticed the confused Soldiers behind her, and thus she nodded powerfully even though her expression was one of unease. Tio's expression that didn't contain any grievance was also a factor that helped Kaori to calm down.

Kaori ran back towards Viz, the Soldiers, and Randzi who had come, too. Explaining the circumstance, she took Tio to a place where they could talk in peace.

* * *

“So, about Hajime-kun and the other two…”

“Hmm, they will surely return soon. After all, Master didn’t think of giving up. And although this one didn’t hear anything due to not having time for that, Master certainly had a plan to escape.”

Having heard what happened in «Guryuu-en Great Volcano», Kaori turned pale while clenching her fists tightly. The uneasiness she felt since the time she and the people of Ancadi saw the gigantic eruption swelt up.

Towards Kaori who clenched her fists and seemed like she would collapse at any time, Tio quietly put her own hands on top of Kaori’s. Afterwards, she watched Kaori with a powerful gaze.

“Kaori. This one hath a message from Master.”

“From Hajime-kun?”

“Mhm. Actually it is for both Kaori and Myuu… “I will meet you later,” Master said.”

Kaori had thought it would be something like “I will surely return” or “Don’t worry” kind of words to reassure Kaori and Myuu. However, the too nonchalant words as if he was saying “I am going to a convenience store now, so let’s meet later,” made Kaori openmoutedly dumbfounded.

Crossing her mind was Hajime's figure who raised a fearless smile and said, "Such a thing is nothing if I become serious, you know?" It was a reassuring figure that would break through any kind of difficulty while smiling. While she was naturally imagining his figure, Kaori was smiling wryly because it was the most reassuring message rather than some kind of unskillful, tough words.

"I see, then it will be okay, huh."

"Mhm, no matter how desperate the situation looks like, Master will surely return like nothing's happened. It is something this one believes…"

"Un… Hajime will be okay. That's why, I must do the things I can here."

"That's right. This one will, of course, help thou."

Recalling how Hajime had missing in the Great Dungeon, Kaori thought Hajime would surely be okay, and like Tio, she believed in him while clenching her fists tightly. Kaori stood up, and she had a resolute look in her eyes to heal the weakened people, who had distributed with the powder from the large amount of "Serene Stone" that was passed on to Randzi's group earlier.

Afterwards, they explained the situation to Myuu who was entrusted to the Lord's daughter, Airi (14 y.o), in the palace. And although Myuu was going to cry because her Hajime papa didn't

return, Tio told her that Hajime's daughter must not cry easily, so she endured it with puffed cheeks.

Although Myuu was someone from the Sea-dweller tribe, knowing she was a companion of a "God's apostle", Kaori, and after looking after her for a while, the people of the palace were knocked out by Myuu's cuteness. Airi, who was prohibited from going out due to her still weakened state, was especially fond of Myuu.

Although there was still the situation about Tio being from the Ryuujin race, Randzie and the other didn't make a big commotion about it because although they were still in doubt, it didn't change the fact that she was the dukedom's benefactor, risking her life to bring them the "Serene Stone."

Kaori and the others healed the patients one after another, but Hajime's group still haven't returned even after two days passed, thus their expressions gradually darkened. Tio had searched for any trace of Hajime's group along the route to «Guryuu-en Great Volcano» several times, but she was at a loss from not finding anything.

Then, after three days had passed since Tio's return, Kaori made a suggestion to Myuu and Tio.

"I think there's no more patient that needs treatment from me now. They only need to rest after this, so it won't be a problem to leave it to the medical center's staff members. That's why… let's go to look for Hajime-kun's group."

“Papa? We are going to meet papa?”

“Hmm, thou art right. This one hath also thought it was about the time to make a move.”

Myuu gladly leaned her body to Kaori’s words while Tio was agreeing with eager expression.

“But, I think we can’t take Myuu along to «Guryuu-en Great Volcano», after all.”

“Thou art correct. If not, there will be no meaning for Master to entrust Myuu to this place. Besides, the eruption from before made it hard to search for them safely.”

“Yeah. I think so, too. That’s why I thought of going to Elisen first to return Myuu-chan to her mama.”

“Fumu, it is indeed a good idea… Yup. Then, it will be better for thee to ride on this one’s back. If it is only until Elisen, this one doesth not even need a day. We will arrive at the evening if we move out in the morning.”

The advancing conversation made a large amount of flowers of “?” bloomed above Myuu’s head. After Kaori explained to Myuu in an easily understandable manner, Myuu made a sad expression because they were not going to meet Hajime. However, she also wanted to meet her mother. After the two told her they were going

to wait for Hajime papa with her, Myuu somehow consented although in reluctance. How Myuu was balancing her real mother with her papa made Kaori and Tio could not help but making wry smiles.

The next day, while watched by the Lord who seemed to want to restrain them, and Viz with his feverish gaze, Kaori and Myuu got on dragonformed Tio's back and flew to the west. From behind, the voice of gratitude and Kaori's name were grandly resounding from the people.

Thinking about her dear person who was once again missing, Kaori vowed to find him again for sure, and she looked straight ahead.

Afterwards, they never thought they would too easily be reunited with him…

Arifureta: Volume 9 Chapter 10

Chapter 90 of the Web Novel.

A Girl Fell From the Sky, the MC's Daughter in this Case

Blue as far as one could see.

A clear sky stretched into the horizon, and the sunlight poured down brilliantly. However, it wasn't that hot, and the climate made it easy to spend the time here. The gentle breeze blowing time after time felt good. Only, there wasn't a single "thing" no matter how much one looked at the surrounding which made one feels a little lonely.

To begin with, that feeling wasn't something that could be helped with. It was in the middle of ocean after all.

At the very center of the ocean, was a ship swaying, drifting about the waves. Well, it wasn't known whether it was okay to call it a ship. After all, the people of this world wouldn't be able to recognize this as a "ship".

As for the reason, the ship's body was a black, lustrous streamline shaped, without a place for passenger to board it unlike normal ships. Normally, the body would also have two small wing-like thingy on both side creating V shape and a screw-like rudder attached behind it… but the only thing that could be seen was the devastated remain of them. If it was smoothed out, the original

slightly flat orca-like shape could be seen.

However, surely the people of this world would agree to call it a new kind of demonic beast rather than a ship. The orca-shaped ship was a submarine. Needless to say, it was Hajime's artefact, allowing its passengers to narrowly escape from death after being thrown inside the magma in «Guryuu-en Great Volcano». In return, it was broken to the level of bring majorly damaged.

Lying above the floating submarine while it was being swept by the waves, with both hands at the back of his head was Hajime sporting an extremely satisfied look. His artificial left arm that was melt after being attacked by the beam and unable to move properly had been fixed using the material from the submarine and returned to its original form. However, the gimmicks installed couldn't be used.

"… Hajime, how's your condition?"

While dozing off cradled by the warm sunlight and the rocking wave, the hatch behind him suddenly opened. Yue popped her head out and asked his about his condition worriedly. It was because Hajime had received huge damage from the beam, and because of the beam's toxin, the wound doesn't easily recover.

"There's no problem at all. All the wounds are already closed. But I feel it will need at least another day for a complete recovery… More importantly, how's the thing on Yue's side? You are considerably exhausted, right?

“Nn… I am okay. Shia gave me her blood after all.”

Hajime’s words of worries were joyfully answered by Yue who got out from the hatch and came Hajime’s side, who was lying down, in all fours. Thus, with an extremely natural movement, she laid on top of Hajime. Her soft butt was pressing up against Hajime and stimulated him in a really bad place.

“… Yue-san, why did you get on top of me?”

“… Because Hajime is there.”

Although the answer was just like a certain mountaineer, Yue’s gaze was serious. Next, Hajime was attacked with a muttered, “… stay like that,” concealed with bewitchment as she flop her body. She licked Hajime’s neck, bit him, and licked the blood that flowed out.

“… Nn, almost all of the toxin has disappeared. It seems like there’s no need to worry.”

Apparently, she licked the Hajime’s blood to confirm how much the beam’s toxin remained.

“Didn’t I say there’s no problem at all?”

“… Nn. But, I can’t help but worry. Our current location is also

problem… But I am glad Hajime can rest easy.”

“Well yeah. It was a truly rapid development. I don’t know whether we are lucky or unlucky…”

Hajime, who was smiling wryly, made Yue frowned with furrowed eyebrows, troubled. The two recalled how they got swallowed by the magma in «Guryuu-en Great Volcano», drifting until they got to where they were at now, in the vast ocean. They had suffered a lot of misfortune that could be lamented on along the way, but it was a happy and lucky thing that they survived. A kind of delicate mindset.

After they were thrown into the magma and drifted underground, Hajime’s party were exposed to the swift current for one full day. Because they couldn’t always use the attracting force of Yue’s “Absolute Calamity” to control the position of their bodies, Hajime somehow managed to create gravity stone using Creation magic, producing floating seat after much trial and error inside the stormy submarine. So, although the submarine kept producing sound just like a toy crashing into walls, the floating seat somehow managed to keep them away from a shaker-like situation.

Following that, with Yue and Shia clinging on his right and left, he spent the sleepless time lighted by the faint light of Green Light stone.

‘Could it be we are going straight into the planet’s mantle?’ Hajime began to question accompanied with cold sweat. However, their underground travel onto the unknown finally ended. Hajime’s party was attacked by the biggest impact they had felt until now. The tremendous impact broke through the defense of “Vajra” and

damaged the submarine. Along with the impact, the submarine was blown away with tremendous speed.

Hurriedly reactivating “Vajra” after the intense impact, Hajime questioned what happened and used the remote camera function from “Farsight stone” installed even in the Cross Bit to confirm the surrounding. Following that, the spectacle that entered his view was not the red world filled by magma, but magma writhing like a snake and greatly boiling the rampaging “sea.”

Apparently, Hajime’s party was blown away by the so called phreatomagmatic explosion when they spouted from a submerged volcano. The impact damaged the hull, but fortunately the water didn’t flood in, or maybe it should be said as expected of Hajime’s artifact.

Narrowly escaping from death, Hajime’s party was relieved to be able to return to the surface, but their suffering continued.

After being dumbfounded from turning round and round by the eruption, and then thrown out into the sea, the party immediately regained the control of the submarine and began their sailing. Both wings and stern were seriously damaged, but it was possible to sail by supplying the submarine with magic power. There was no problem other than the fuel consumption rate was overwhelmingly worse compared to when the screw, wings, and stern could be used.

Because it wouldn’t be able to endure another eruption, Hajime’s party hurriedly moved away, but a gigantic shadow followed the orca-shaped submarine. It was a gigantic squid-like creature. With length reaching 30 meters, and with more than 30 wriggling

tentacles, its appearance was similar to a sea monster, the Kraken.

The monster mercilessly attacked the submarine. Twined by tentacles, the submarine was about to be crunched by sharp fangs that in the middle of its mouth. However, the monster was repelled by the submarine's weapon (torpedo) and Yue's magic.

Nevertheless, it didn't end even after they repelled the Kraken-like monster. This time, they were attacked by a flock of sharks. The sharks were a kind of demonic beast, annoying enemies that cooperated while shooting out water tornados.

In the end, the ammunition inside the submarine was depleted and they could only rely on Yue's magic. It was a situation where Yue used the magic power stocked inside Magic-crystallization stone and sucked Shia's blood, since Hajime had already loss a large amount of blood. They somehow managed to get away while repelling the sharks, but they fought in «Guryuu-en Great Volcano» before so Hajime's party had indeed exhausted all of their energy. Although Shia didn't really do anything, she collapsed from anemia due to offering her blood to Yue because it was "the least" she could do.

Letting Yue and Shia rest, Hajime moved the submarine to the surface. They were in a location where there was only the sea and blue sky as far as the eye could reach, so they advanced towards the continent. Then, after sailing for half a day, due to calm climate and wave, Hajime halted the sub and rested, basking in the sunlight outside the sub.

The development from conquering «Guryuu-en Great Volcano» until the present time was truly a rapid one. No matter what, it

could be said that other people except Hajime's party wouldn't have any possibility of surviving at all. It was alright for Hajime to unconsciously want to shout "What a bad luck!" like a certain user of gender-equal punch.

"How's Shia?"

Although he was looking at the distance, Hajime asked Yue who's currently seated on top of him.

"… She is still sleeping. I drank a lot… so she probably won't wake up for a while."

Yue's reason was that the amount converted to magic power wasn't as efficient compared to when she sucked Hajime's blood. It was because the amount converted was several times more from Hajime, her partner of "Blood Pact," than Shia who wasn't. After picking the partner for "Blood Pact," the effect of "Blood Conversion" from other people lowered while the effect became several times bigger if it was her contracted partner.

"I see. Well, it's better for her to rest now. Anyway, we don't know our current location much less about the time needed to reach the continent. We also don't know what will happen so it is better to take our time to recover."

"…Nn."

The sea was at the west of the continent, so they only needed to head for the east to reach the continent. There was no problem because they could create water from magic and catch fish for meals. Things like fishes wouldn't be able to escape from the submarine and magic, so even though they were in the middle of the vast ocean, it wasn't a situation to be panicked about. Also, as long as they can confirm their location using the star at night, they could determine the course towards the continent. As such, they rested when they should.

The warm sunlight and breeze made Hajime relaxed. Watching Hajime with narrowed eyes, Yue…

"… Yue-san. What are you doing?"

"… Making Hajime energetic."

Before he was aware of it, Yue exuded a bewitching aura and moved slowly. She seemed to want to energize him. But although she didn't say which part, when Hajime saw Yue's blurred eyes, he didn't even think of resisting.

"Ngh… fufu, Hajime has become energetic."

"… Wait, to do it in the middle of the ocean… Well, if it was me from half a year ago, I wouldn't even imagine it."

In the place they felt safe about while they were glad to be alive,

Hajime and Yue showed each other's body. For a while, the submarine was shaken by something other than the small waves.

* * *

"Seems you've been enjoying yourselves…"

After being refreshed from various ways, they returned inside the submarine and were stared at by Shia.

"Ng? You are awake, eh. How's your condition?"

"Acting as if nothing happened, but I am thankful for the worry. My drowsiness was blown away thanks to the intense shaking, the very entranced voices, and those fresh sounds. My physical condition is excellent from energy converted from emptiness and loneliness. Yeah, with this, I will be attacked, too, or so I thought."

"I see, then that's good."

Hajime was truly glad that Shia recovered, but since he didn't show any feelings of guilt, it made Shia, "Uu~," groaned with teary eyes. Her appearance made Hajime thought he ignored her too much. Smiling wryly, he told her to make space and sat beside her.

Waking up without anyone inboard and hearing the sounds of Hajime and Yue making love from the opened hatch, made Shia

truly lonely, and thus she hugged Hajime who sat beside her, tightly. Yue also sat by Shia's side, not Hajime's, and patted Shia's head to comfort her.

While the two were comforting Shia, Hajime supplied his magic power to start the submarine, advancing to the east. From time to time, they were attacked by demonic beasts, but were repulsed by Yue's magic, and they advanced for one full day. Having advanced through under the starry sky, Hajime finally caught the sight of land when the morning sunshine brightened the world.

According to the position of the stars they saw last night, the party was currently located in the north of Elisen. As such, as long as they moved towards the left side over the land, they would surely come to see the harbor along with Elisen and «Guryuu-en Great Desert».

Relieved from seeing land, they advanced south for two days.

When the sun reached the zenith on the second day, the party stopped the submarine to take a break, and had lunch above the submarine while being swayed by the wave. The menu was of course the fishes they caught in the sea. Using "Lightning-clad" to roast the food, made him recalled the time he was in the abyss. The party didn't have any cooking utensil or any seasoning because the "Treasure Box" was entrusted to Tio.

Even so, the fish the three happily ate while absentmindedly watching the horizon was quite the delish. The location and atmosphere were compensating for the seasoning. Those who lived in the sea, or opened a stall during a festival, all of them were uses this kind of compensation.

And when Shia was enjoying the roasted unknown fish, her rabbit-ears suddenly stood straight then began to move restlessly. Following that, “Nn?,” Hajime also noticed a presence of something. Filling his mouth with a fish of about 60 centimeters in length, he moved his gaze.

Surrounding the submarine, zoom!, several people appeared from inside the sea and thrust their tridents. There were about 20 people. All of them have emerald green hair and ears that looked like fan-shaped fin. By their looks, they were a group of Sea-dweller tribe. Their eyes were overflowed with caution and dangerously narrowed.

Among them, a man faced Hajime with thrust spear and asked him.

“Who are you? Why are you here? And what’s the thing you are riding on?”

Hajime was busy chewing the fish that filled his mouth to the point of his cheeks swelling. He didn’t plan on opposing them, so he wanted to answer quickly, but unfortunately the fish he was currently eating was chewy and large. It took time before he could swallow it.

Hajime took a serious pose, but considering how he calmly ate his meal even though spears were pointed at him while being surrounded, made others see him as nothing but an impudent fellow.

Veins appeared on the forehead of the man who asked him. Anyhow, even if they had their doubts, it was too much for them to be this menacing after finding humans in the sea. Shia thought of breaking the volatile situation by answering in the place of Hajime.

“Ah, umm, please calm down. We are…”

“Silent! A Rabbitman tribe like you should not open your mouth!”

The Rabbitman tribe’s position was low even among Demi-human race outside of the Sea of Trees. How they were strangely agitated and how they stubbornly wanted Hajime, who was looking down on them (from their POV), to answer them might also be a factor. Changing the target of his spear, the man grandly thrust the spear at Shia.

The attack of a Sea-dweller tribe would not pass through Shia’s defense with her strengthened body; the thrust spear would only shallowly cut Shia’s cheek even if she didn’t dodge it. The man probably wanted to slightly hurt her to give Hajime a warning. As expected, the party felt it was abnormal. After all, the Sea-dweller tribe wasn’t this fierce.

However, that was a bad move no matter what their circumstances were. No matter, if it was for a warning, Hajime would not let go those who tried to hurt Shia.

In a moment, huge killing intent and pressure poured down like a huge cataract, spreading on the sea’s surface like a ripple, causing rough waves.

BOOOOM!!!

With his eyes opened wide, the man who was staring at Hajime's sudden change was, blown away from his spot, accompanied by a loud sound. He bounced several times on the surface of the sea, flew while spinning, and finally sank into the sea.

With dumbfounded expressions, the remaining Sea-dweller tribe's members moved their gaze from the blown man to Hajime who somehow was gripping the tail of a large, roasted fish with a pose of someone having done a full golf's swing.

The splashing sea water was sparkling as it reflected the sunlight. Even the eyes of the dead fish were somehow shining.

"Wh-, wh-."

The Sea-dweller tribe's members were flustered.

Shouldering the somewhat eaten fish, Hajime glared at the man beside the blown away man. Needless to say, having received a pressure he never felt before, the man of Sea-dweller tribe thrust his spear while shouting as he panicked from being glared by Hajime.

"ZeeAAh!!"

Even in all of the man's life until now, it was an attack that satisfied him the most. Having premonition of death, he instinctively did a sure-kill attack. However, the sure-kill attack pierced into the mouth of the white eyed fish and was easily stopped.

"Eh? What? H-How…"

When Hajime swung the fish, the man was dumbfounded after seeing the unbelievable spectacle, and thus the spear was easily snatched. The swinging momentum made the spear fly out from the fish's mouth, directly hitting the face of another person of Sea-dweller tribe. Leering at the person from Sea-dweller tribe who groaned as the blood gushed out from his bleeding nose, Hajime once again swung fish.

The man whose spear was taken and thrown away had cramped cheeks because of the nonsensical scene of the white-eyed fish approaching his face with its opened mouth and somehow shining in bright red.

Then,

BAM!!!

"Hmmm?!"

He was blown away just like the man earlier.

“Munch, munch… gulp… Now then, I actually don’t want to fight against the Sea-dweller tribe. As such, why don’t we calm down and have a talk here? However, indeed I can’t stay silent if someone tries to hurt my companion… Ah, the people blown away wouldn’t die because I held back, okay?”

With the limp fish in one hand, which lost its shine, Hajime proposed after deactivating his “Pressure.” Hajime himself didn’t really want to fight the Sea-dweller tribe’s people who were of the same tribe as Myuu. Although the other side tried to kill him, he actually didn’t even see them as a neighbourhood uncle (totally ignoring them).

However, the Sea-dweller tribe didn’t seem to accept his proposal. It was because their pride seemed to have been damaged by Hajime who looked down at them expressing “you are not even my match” even though humans were at a disadvantageous position in the sea, and he had blown away their comrades even though he said they didn’t die.

Moreover, because of their abnormally high alert against the human race, they could not trust Hajime’s words at all. We must not let our guards down! They took distance from Hajime’s party, and took a stance ready to throw the short harpoons on their backs.

“I see. It’s not enough to kidnapping that child, huh? That’s why you come here again to kidnap other children of ours?”

“We won’t give you the time to cast any magic! The sea is our territory, don’t think you can return unhurt!”

“We will make you spit that child’s location even if we need to chop your limbs!”

“Don’t worry. We will keep you alive until we hand you over to the Kingdom. Your safety isn’t guaranteed though.”

It seemed to be an abnormal situation. Rather than being cautious, strong grudge could be seen lodged in their eyes. Hajime somehow understood the cause of their agitation from the words “kidnap other children.” These people were likely to have misunderstood him as the one who kidnapped Myuu. Riding on unknown transportation and taking along a slave from Rabbitman tribe while wandering around the territory of Sea-dweller tribe… It wasn’t so strange for a human like him to be misunderstood.

The Demi-human race held a very strong unity and affection towards their race. It was certainly so for their own race, but it was even stronger among their own tribe. Haulia tribe went out of the Sea of Trees just for Shia, while the Bearman tribe ignored the decision of the Chiefs’ conference to take revenge on the one who injured their chief. Even the Sea-dweller tribe wasn’t any different. Any children of their tribe are important, even they weren’t their own.

Secretly, Hajime was sulking a little as he complained, “Even if she doesn’t go her way to treat me as her father, she has these people treat her like their daughter, eh.” The mutter mixed with a wry smile was aimed at Myuu who wasn’t here. Following that, Hajime tried to say Myuu’s name to solve the misunderstanding.

“Ah~, you know, about that kidna-…”

“Get ’em!!”

However, faster than his words, the Sea-dweller tribe began to throw the harpoons one after another. Even though the lower half of their bodies was underwater, treading on it, the harpoons were flying with a considerable speed and indeed they were aimed at the shoulders or feet, and not to kill them. In thoroughness, they were also stabbing the submarine which shook it intensely.

If it was a normal human, he would have his balance broken and would either be pierced by the harpoons from being unable of taking evasive maneuver or fall into the sea and suppressed by the Sea-dweller tribe. Well, if it was a normal human.

“”Wave Castle.””

With Yue’s mutter, the sea water compressed as it surged, obstructing the harpoons coming from all directions. Following that, while the Sea-dweller tribe were still astonished by the non-chanted magic, Yue made around 20 thunder balls floating around her.

At the same time the sound of upsurge seawater had literally became a rampart, returned to normal. The people of Sea-dweller tribe witnessed the floating and sparkling thunderballs around Yue.

“Kh!? R-Retreaaatt!!”

A scream of order rang out. The paled tribe members panicky turned on their heels to run away. However, they were too slow.

Fwoosh!! Bzz! BZzz! BzZZzz!!

Each of the thunder balls flew towards a different direction, not letting even one of the Sea-dweller tribe away… mildly electric shocked them. “ABABABABABABABAh,” such a scream could be heard from them. After a while, the 21 people of Sea-dweller tribe were floating on the surface.

“Yue, cheers for the good work.”

“Nn… Hajime, about the thing these people were saying.”

“Well, it must be about Myuu.”

“A lot of things happened even when we were going to Elisen. As expected of Hajime-san. Not even having the time spent in a town, a problem had already appeared…”

“Please stop, Shia. I am actually a little worried about that, too… damnit. There should’ve been no problem here if Myuu was

here…”

Hajime was sighing while he worried about it. Then, for the time being, he moved to gather the people of Sea-dweller tribe’s drowned bodies.

* * *

After he instantly remodelled the sub by making a carrier where he put the afro-haired, white-eyed people of Sea-dweller tribe, the party continued their voyage.

Yue effectively weakened one of the thunders, which made the person immediately awake. That person guided the party into the harbor after they explained the situation to him.

At first, because Hajime knew Myuu’s name and characteristics the man said, ‘So you are the culprit after all!’, as he raged. However, Hajime was already irritated, so he expressionlessly slapped him until the man calmed down, and the man heard the party’s story after being disciplined.

Following that, when the party told him Myuu was currently in Ancadi and will immediately returned to Elisen. The man asked the party to allow him to tag along with them to Ancadi. For the man, he could not just swallowed Hajime’s party’s story without any proof, so he wanted to go along with the party to Ancadi to at least find a clue about Myuu.

Beside the young man before them who was guiding them, the people who previously were bellowing at Hajime were those who directly knew Myuu. Myuu's mother was also injured when Myuu was kidnapped, thus these people were becoming emotional. And, because he would feel awkward when he reunites with Myuu after having beaten up her acquaintances, Hajime reluctantly accepted the young man's request.

Following that, after advancing on the sea for a few hours,

"Ah, Hajime-san! It has come into view! The town is! Finally, a place with people!"

"Nn? Ohh, it really is in the middle of the sea, eh."

Shia was pointing at «Elisen» with sparkling eyes and said to Hajime. Moving his gaze, indeed a big town floating above the sea had come into his view.

Hajime moved the submarine towards the place with a lot of protruding piers. After leering at the Sea-dweller tribe, human tourists and merchants who became pop-eyed after seeing Hajime riding on an unknown vessel, the party moored at a vacant spot.

The people of the Sea-dweller tribe came before the party, witnessed the tens of unconscious people of Sea-dweller tribe on the submarine's carrier, and raised a commotion. However, Hajime thought it would be okay because he had explained the situation to the young man, so for the time being, he and the young man unloaded the fainted people onto the pier.

After they did that, fully-armed people of Sea-dweller tribe and human soldiers had already crowded in. The young man took a step forward to explain the situation and began to talk like a big shot. Hajime had wanted to quickly return to Ancadi and meet Kaori's group so when he watched the young man, he became irritated and said inwardly, "Just decide who will travel with us already!"

Hajime wanted this to end peacefully, but it indeed couldn't be that smooth. Pushing aside the young man who was confused, the soldiers rushed to the party. Hajime's party were surrounded without a place to escape on the small pier.

"Be obedient. Let us restrain you until we can clarify the truth."

"Oi, oi, didn't you hear the story?"

"Of course. And it is better if we are the one who go to confirm it. There's no need for you to go."

Words without any chance of refusal. Hajime became even more irritated, but he controlled himself because here was Myuu's hometown.

"Listen here. Our companions are waiting for us there. But, even though we want to immediately head to Ancadi, didn't we come all the way here to return those who mistakenly attacked us?"

“Regardless if it was a misunderstanding or not… even if the kidnapped child is indeed in Ancadi, you’re suspicious because you wandered around Elisen’s territory on an unidentified vessel. There’s no saying you won’t run away on our way to Ancadi, right?”

“What’s with this situation this time? If we want to run away, we can just annihilate these people and escape right after that.”

“There’s also that point. But, it didn’t change that you entered our jurisdiction without permission. Furthermore, you attacked the vigilante corps that discovered you, there’s no way we can release you that easily.”

“It was them who didn’t listen to us and attacked due to their agitation. Even so, you think we would obediently let you restrain us? … just cut it out already.”

Hajime’s eyes narrowed dangerously. The man who seemed to be the leader of the soldiers before him was frowning from the heavy aura overflowing from Hajime.

On the leader’s chest was the badge with Herrlicht Kingdom’s crest, surmising that he was the commander of the regiment sent under pretext of the Kingdom’s protection. Among the Sea-dweller tribe, there were people who might be from the vigilante corps, and they didn’t back away even though they were taken aback by Hajime’s aura.

For Hajime, this place was Myuu's hometown and he didn't want any problem in Elisen since he thought it was likely to become the party's base because they would surely take time to search «Meljeene Bottom Sea Ruin», whose location was unknown. It was the truth that Myuu was in Ancadi, and he understood the suspicion could be solved. However, Hajime's hostility to the injustice in this world could be called a conditioned reflex. As such, he wouldn't easily accept this.

It was a truly explosive situation.

Within the raised tension, Hajime thought that he must not rampaging in Myuu's hometown, and by the time he wanted to concede,

"Nn? Just now…"

With her rabbit-ears moving about, Shia began to look around the sky. Hajime didn't look away from the commander and asked, "What is it?" However, before Shia could answer him, Hajime also felt a small presence and voice.

"—!"

"Ah? What?"

"—pa— !"

“Oy, it can’t be!?”

“—Papaa~!”

Hajime hurriedly looked up and somehow a small shadow was falling from the empty sky!

With arms spread, the shadow that was free falling full of smile was…

“Myuu-!?”

That’s right, it was Myuu. Myuu was skydiving. Without parachute. Looking carefully, behind her was the black dragonform of Tio, who was hurriedly descending, and riding on her back was Kaori who was also in a panic.

As soon as he recognized the falling shadow was Myuu, Hajime activated “Aerodynamic” and “Ground Shrinker.” He immediately jumped from his spot, ignoring the pier that was blown by the impact and the soldiers screaming as they fell into the sea.

Hajime that had instantly jumped for more than 100 meters in height thanks to “Aerodynamic,” to jump towards the place Myuu was going to fall through, and activated “Light Speed.” Inside the slowed down world, he made sure Myuu was in his arms, and he

fell with a regulated, miracle-like speed, perfectly nulled any kind of shock.

With Myuu in his embrace, Hajime used “Aerodynamic” to hop and bounced until he reached the ground. Inwardly, the cold sweat was flowing like a waterfall.

“Papa-!”

Without even knowing a shred of what Hajime was thinking, Myuu rubbed her face on Hajime’s chest with a smiling face. Perhaps, it was Tio who told her Hajime was right under them.

Thus, although he didn’t know whether it was accidental or perhaps deliberated, she fell towards Hajime. Seeing how she was smiling as she fell, there’s no mistake she believed Hajime would surely catch her.

Even so, it took an extraordinary courage to do a free-fall with a full smiling face. Restrain yourself! Hajime retorted at the four year old child in his mind. Hajime was frowning as he thought of scolding her. But when they got to the ground, he patted Myuu.

Arifureta: Volume 10 Chapter 1

Chapter 91 of the Web Novel.

Mother and Daughter's Reunion

"Hic, sob, hic."

A sobbing sound of a young girl resounding nearby the pier that had turned into wreckage. The onlookers and soldiers were crowding there, but there was not even a clamor, and the place was strangely quiet.

It was because of the should be kidnapped girl of Sea-dweller tribe who flew down from the sky, the human boy who jumped into the sky and caught her, and there was the black dragon with a girl riding on its back in the sky. However, the biggest reason was how the boy greatly scolded the girl from Sea-dweller tribe. Well, actually, it was how the young girl called the boy who scolded her.

"Sob, Papa, sorry…"

"Promise me you won't do anything that dangerous again, okay?"

"Un, Myuu will."

“Okay, that’s good. Come here.”

“Papaa~!”

The figures of Hajime, who was on one knee as he scolded the young child, and Myuu, who obediently reflected as she scolded by him though she cried then and jumped into Hajime’s chest when she was forgiven… were as normal as that of a father and his child. It was also shown by how Myuu repeatedly called him “Papa.”

The situation where the should’ve been kidnapped child of Sea-dweller tribe “adoring” a human boy enough to treat him as her father, and how Hajime treated Myuu as his own daughter made everyone dumbfounded, not understanding what had happened. Their minds were asking the same thing. Which was, “How did it come to this?”

Hajime lifted Myuu with his arm and patted her back to calm her, and finally, the surrounding people returned to their senses and began to cause a great commotion.

As he leered at the clamoring, perplexed people, Hajime patted Myuu’s back and someone hugged him from behind… when he looked over his shoulder, there was Kaori’s figure whose head was on his shoulder, slightly trembling.

“I’m glad… I am really glad~, hic, hic.”

This time, Kaori had begun to cry. Even though she acted firm, inside, she was worried Hajime might be dead. She believed in Hajime's survival, but there was no way she didn't feel worried about him. That added to how he went missing for the second time shortly after they finally met again, enduring it was impossible for her

"I am sorry to make you worry. But as you can see, I am full of life here. That's why, please don't cry… if Kaori cry… I will be imensely troubled."

"Uh, hic, th-then, let me stay like this for a little more…"

Troubled, Hajime patted Kaori's head whose hands were wrapped around his arm. However, maybe because she couldn't stop crying, Kaori buried her face more and more into Hajime's shoulder. Both of her hands were now tightly embracing around Hajime's stomach from behind.

"Oi, you, explain what are yo-gah!?"

"Muh? Sorry."

The above was the commander-like person who was dripping wet due to being blown away into the seas as the consequence of Hajime's jump. He didn't read the mood and tried to question Hajime. However, he was knocked by Tio (deactivated her Dragonform when she landed) who was running in short steps towards Hajime, thus the man once again fell into the sea.

Not minding the man that much, Tio came beside Hajime, held his head and pressed it into her cleavage.

“What the—!? Oi, Tio.”

“This one believes, thou know? This one believes… even so, Master… too much time hath passed until this reunion.”

When Hajime quietly looked at Tio’s face from her cleavage, her expression was one of ascerting her important one inside her arms with tears accumulated on the edges of her eyes. This time, Hajime felt it couldn’t be helped and let her do as she pleases because he had relied on her to do something unreasonable.

While that happened, Myuu said, “Myuu will hug Papa too~,” and she clung to Hajime’s nape. Shia, who was beside Yue, who was beside Hajime, began to hug his free arm.

The surrounding gazes couldn’t even see Hajime, as his whole body was covered by a beautiful little girl, beautiful girls, and a beautiful woman. The surrounding gazes were gradually changing from one of perplexion to one of looking at them warmly. Even the agitated vigilante corps and soldiers had lowered their arms, dumbfounded.

“You people… not only once, but twice… I will arrest you for obstructing the Kingdom’s soldiers’ work.”

Once again crawled up onto the pier, the commander-like person was angrily glaring at Hajime's party. With weapon in hand, he seemed to be ready to attack at any moment. Though Hajime couldn't be thought of as the kidnapper from how the kidnapped Myuu was abnormally too attached him, there were too many unknown things about him, so of course the man wanted to question him.

Ever Hajime since the beginning had wanted to explain that he was entrusted by the head of Fhu-ren's guild branch, Ilwa, to escort Myuu. However, he was troubled as he had nothing to prove that, but now it was at hand.

With "Treasure Box" returned by Tio, Hajime took out his status plate and the request form from Ilwa, then he presented them to the commander.

"… Let me see… a "Gold" rank!? Moreover, a direct request from the head of Fhuren's branch!?"

Other than the request form, there was also the letter from Ilwa where the details were written. It was addressed to the Elisen's mayor and the top brass of the soldiers who resided in this town, the man before the party. After reading the letter intently, the commander spated a big sigh and after he hesitated a little, he gave up as he drooped his shoulder then saluted.

"… The request has been completed. Nagumo-dono."

"It is good that all doubts have been cleared. You must have things

that you want to ask, but we are in a hurry. So I want you to not ask anything because… I want to let this child meet her mother right now. It's okay, right?"

"Of course it is. However, as a soldier of this Kingdom… I can't overlook about the dragon, you jumping, and the ship-like thing from before."

Radically changing from the previous oppressive manner, the commander's attitude became one which paid Hajime with respect. Even so, he appealed with his strong gaze to Hajime that it was impossible to overlook those.

"About that, can we just talk about it in another time? I am going to stay in this Elisen for a while, after all. I also think there's no need to report about it to the kingdom because they probably already know about it…"

"Mm, I see. Anyway, it's good as long as we can have a chance to talk. Now please return that child to her mother… does she know of her mother's condition?"

"No, she doesn't. But it's okay. After all, we have the best medicine and healer here."

"I see. Then let me question you once things are settled."

The commander lastly introduced himself as Saluz, then he went to

control the crowd by dispersing the onlookers. A dutiful person.

The people who know Myuu seemed to want to call out to her, but Hajime used his gaze to stop them because much time would pass before she returns to her mother if they did that.

“Papa, Papa. We are returning to home. Mama is waiting! Myuu wants to meet Mama.”

“Of course… so let’s hurry and meet her.”

Pulling Hajime’s hand, Myuu urged on with “Hurry, hurry!” It had been around two months since the last time she returned to her house and mother. So it couldn’t be helped. Though she was usually laughing as she was taken care of by Hajime’s party on their way, at night when the time to sleep came, she wanted to be spoiled because she indeed missed her mother.

On their way to Myuu’s house, with Myuu as their guide, Kaori came close to him and asked him with a small, uneased voice.

“Hajime-kun. About what the soldier from before said…”

“Well, it doesn’t seem to be life threatening. It’s just that her wound is rather severe and it’s also the physiological one… well there’s no need to worry about the latter with Myuu being here. So please check her injury.”

“Un. Leave it to me.”

While having that kind of conversation, they heard a commotion from the road ahead. It was the voice of a young woman and several voices of men and women.

“Lemia, calm down! It’s impossible with the condition of your legs!”

“That’s right, Lemia-chan. Myuu-chan will surely come back!”

“I don’t want to! Didn’t you say Myuu have come back!? Then, I must go to see her! I need to welcome her!”

Apparently, the woman tried to get out of the house, and she was stopped by several men and women. It was likely because an acquaintance had told Myuu’s mother of her return.

With the resounding of the frantic voice of the woman called Lemia, Myuu’s face bloomed and shone. Then, as loud as she could, she called out to the woman in her mid twenties, who had collapsed at the entrance door, while running.

“Mama～～!!”

“—!? Myuu!? Myuu!”

Running with all her might and with an expression full of smile Myuu jumped into the bosom of the woman — her mother, Lemia, who tried to steady her legs before the front door.

Seeing the figures of a mother closely and tightly embracing her daughter, expressing she didn’t want to be separated again from her child made the surrounding people look at them warmly.

For so many, many times Lemia repeatedly said, “I am sorry,” to Myuu. It was either because she had lost sight of Myuu or her incapability to come looking for her or may both.

Tears fell as Lemia both feel relieved from her daughter’s safety and also the grief from being incapable of protecting hear. Looking at Lemia with anxious eyes, Myuu gently patted her mother’s head.

“It’s okay. Mama, Myuu is here. So there’s nothing to worry.”

“Myuu…”

Never did she thought she would be comforted by her four year old daughter, so Lemia’s teary eyes unconsciously wide opened and she watched Myuu.

Myuu was also looking straight at Lemia and there’s indeed worry

about Lemia lodged inside her eyes. Myuu was a mama's girl and couldn't stand being alone before she was kidnapped, and although she also had painful times herself, she was more brokenhearted about her mother than herself in this reunion.

Surprised by that, Lemia was unconsciously watching Myuu in seriousness which made Myuu smiled, and this time she was the one who hugged Lemia tightly. Lemia wasn't that badly injured both in body and mind, but she was suffering from the sleepless night, overly worrying about Myuu, but it seemed her daughter had returned all grown up more than before.

This fact made Lemia inadvertently raised a wry smile. With her shoulders relaxed and her tears stopped, Lemia was looking at her daughter with eyes filled with love.

Myuu and Lemia once again hugged each other, but suddenly, Myuu raised a scream-like voice.

"Mama! Your legs! What happened!? Are you injured!? Is it hurt!?"

Apparently, Myuu noticed the state of Lemia's legs from over Lemia's shoulder. Both of her feet peeking from Lemia's long skirt were bandaged all over, they were in a miserable state.

This was the thing Saluz talked about, and it was what Hajime's party heard from the young man on their way to Elisen. The thing that made the Sea-dweller tribe agitated was not only was Myuu kidnapped, but also how her mother was seriously injured that it became impossible for her to walk.

Though Myuu said she was kidnapped when she was separated from Lemia, the Sea-dweller tribe wouldn't be able to say it was a kidnapping unless there's an eyewitness. They were able to declare so because it seemed Lemia had actually encountered the kidnappers.

Lemia had discovered suspicious men erasing their footprints in the sand near the coast when she was looking for Myuu when she got separated from her. Though she felt a bad premonition, she approached the men to ask whether they know her daughter… the men's faces were expressing "Oh shit" and began to chant all of a sudden.

Convinced the men had a part on Myuu's disappearance, Lemia tried to somehow get Myuu back, running along the footprints.

However, one of the men fought back by firing flame bullets. Fortunately, she avoided being hit on her upper body but her legs were hit instead, then she was blown into the sea by the impact. Lemia lost her consciousness from both the pain and impact. When she woke up, she was being helped by the people from vigilante corps who went looking for her because she have not returned.

Her life was saved, but as the time passed, Lemia still couldn't feel her legs, thus she became unable to walk nor to swim. Naturally, Lemia tried to search for her daughter, but she couldn't due to her legs. In the end, she could do nothing but to leave it to the vigilante corps and the Kingdom.

Lemia was in a state where she couldn't even stand properly now.

Lemia smiled to try not to make her daughter worry more than this, so she tried telling Myuu, “It’s okay.” However, faster than her, Myuu asked for help from her “Papa” whom she depended on the most in this world.

“Papaa! Please help Mama! Mama’s legs are injured!”

“Eh!? M-Myuu? Just now…”

“Papa! Hurryy!”

“Ara? Arara? You said Papa? Myuu, who is this Papa?”

Confused, lot of “?”s floated above Lemia’s head. The surrounding people were also clamoring. A lot of absurd remarks were flying from here and there such as:

“Lemia… has remarried? No… NO WAY.”

“Finally, Lemia-chan’s spring has arrived again! Congratulation!”

“It’s lie, right? Someone, please tell me it is a lie… My Lemia-san…”

“Papa… Myuu said Papa!? Isn’t it me!?”

“I am sure it is someone with stage name like Ku***ngpapa, yup, it must be it.”

“Oi, time for an emergency conference! All members of “Watching Lemia-san and Myuu-chan warmly” gather now! Storm is coming!”

Apparently, Lemia and Myuu, this mother and daughter were popular here. Lemia was still young, in the mid of her twenties. Although she was considerably emaciated now, she had a well-sculpted looks similar to Myuu’s. It was easy to imagine how attention grabbing her beauty would be once she was recovered, so it was understandable for her to be popular.

With the commotion that kept growing, Hajime’s expression cramped expressing, “I don’t want to go there now.” Though he thought these people would understand once he explained the details about how Myuu came to call Hajime papa, he was just a “substitute (though inwardly they didn’t think so)” of her Papa, and he wasn’t aiming to marry Lemia, but the current misunderstanding were growing at an uncontrollable pace.

However, Hajime thought it was a godsend. After all, Hajime and his party wouldn’t be able to continue their journey unless they left Myuu to her mother. It will be a goodbye once his party conquered «Meljeene Bottom Sea Ruin». Hajime thought Myuu had come close to Hajime’s party because she was in a place away from her hometown and been forcibly separated from mother, so once she returned to her mother her desire to be by Hajime’s party’s side would surely weakened as time passed, though she would be saddened at first. The surrounding people were strongly concerned

about Lemia and her daughter, so they would surely helped them.

“Papaa! Hurrry! Please help Mama!”

Myuu’s gaze was firmly looking at where Hajime was, thus Lemia and the surrounding people noticed Hajime once they traced Myuu’s gaze. Hajime gave up and walked to where the mother and daughter were.

“Papa, Mama is…”

“It’s okay Myuu… I will surely heal her. So please don’t make such a tearful look.”

“Okay…”

Hajime rustled Myuu’s hair who was looking at him with tearful expression, then he moved his gaze to Lemia. Lemia was watching Hajime, dumbfounded. While thinking it couldn’t be helped for her to do that, Hajime decided to carry her into the house to heal her because his appearance had made the commotion grow we more.

“I am sorry, but excuse me for a moment, okay?”

“Eh? —!? Arara?”

Hajime lifted Lemia in princess carry while looking like he didn't feel her weight at all. Then, he carried Lemia into the house guided by Myuu. With Hajime carrying Lemia, screams and roars were raised behind them, which he ignored. Lemia herself could only blinking from being suddenly lifted and carried by Hajime.

Having entered the house, he found a sofa in the living room, so Hajime slowly lowered Lemia there. Following that, while watching the blinking Lemia who was sitting on the sofa before him, Hajime called out to Kaori.

"Kaori, how is she?"

"Let me look at her… Lemia-san, I will touch your foot. Please say if it hurts."

"Y-Yes? Umm, what's with this situation?"

When she thought her kidnapped daughter had suddenly returned, a man whom her daughter adored and called Papa appeared. Furthermore, unknown beautiful girls and a beautiful woman gathered in her house. Such a situation made Lemia eyebrows frowned, troubled.

While that happened, Kaori's examination ended and she told Lamia that her damaged legs' nerves would be able to be recovered with her healing magic.

“However, it will take some time. The damaged nerves were in delicate places, so I will need around three days for there not to have any side effects to occur. Also, I think it will be better for them to heal little by little. Although it will be inconvenient, please hang on until then because I will surely heal you.”

“Ara ara, maa maa. I had thought I wouldn’t be able to walk anymore… how can I repay you…”

“Fufu, don’t worry about it. You are Myuu-chan’s mother after all.”

“Umm, come to think of it, what is everyone’s relation to Myuu… furthermore, umm… why did Myuu call that person “Papa”…”

While Kaori immediately begin to treat Lemia’s legs, Hajime’s party decided to explain Lemia the details about things. About how they met Myuu in Fhuren, the riot, and how did Hajime came to be called Papa. Having heard everything while being treated by Kaori, Lemia deeply bowed her head in place, then repeatedly thanked them in tears.

“Truly, how can repay you for this… It is thanks to you that I was able to reunite with my daughter. I will surely repay this kindness of yours even with my life. As long as it is something I can do, whatever it is…”

Although Hajime’s party told her to not mind it, Lemia couldn’t consent not to repay the benefactors of her daughter’s life. In the mean time, the treatment from Kaori ended for today. When they told Lemia they were looking for an inn, Lemia thought it was a

godsend and asked them to just use her house.

“Please at least let me do this much. Fortunately, this house is big, so there’s room for everyone. Please don’t hold back and use this house while you are staying in Elisen. Besides, Myuu will be happy with this. Right, Myuu? You are happy that Hajime-san and the others stay in our house, right?”

“? Papa is going somewhere?”

Hearing Lemia’s words, Myuu who was resting her head on Lemia’s lap woke up, blinking, she was dumbfounded. Apparently, she seemed to think it was a natural thing for Hajime to stay in her house. Her expression said she didn’t understand why Lemia asked her that question.

“I thought of putting a little distance once she returned to her own mother…”

“Ara ara, ufufu. It isn’t good for Papa to take a distance from her daughter, you know?”

“No, didn’t I explained it before? We are…”

“I know that you will continue your travel sooner or later. However, that’s why please keep being her “Papa” until that day comes. If you take a distance know, then it would be a sudden goodbye… right?”

“… Well, if you say so…”

“Ufufu, it is okay too for you to always be her “Papa”, you know? After all, I have said “with my life” before…”

Saying so, “Ufufu &#9825″, Lemia laughed with one hand on her slightly blushing cheek. Such a calming and beautiful smile would normally calmed anyone… but a blizzard generated around Hajime.

“Please don’t joke like that… the atmosphere turned cold now…”

“Ara ara, how popular. However, it is almost five years since I lost my husband… Myuu also want a Papa, right?”

“Fue? Isn’t Papa Papa?”

“Ufufu, she said it, so Papa?”

The blizzard became much more intense. Though he didn’t know whether Lemia actually notice the cold atmosphere, her calm aura made her words neither be taken as a joke nor a serious one. “That’s a good courage, you!,” was what Yue and the girls’ gazes said, which was easily warded off by Lemia with a smile along with, “Ara ara, ufufu.” She might be an unexpectedly great person.

In the end, the party decided to stay in Lemia's house. When time to allocate the rooms, Lemia said, "Shouldn't the husband and wife be together?" which responded with silent reply from Yue and the girls. Then, Myuu said, "Myuu will sleep with Papa and Mama," which turned the place into a chaos, but at least it calmed down for now.

The party were going to conquer the next Great Dungeon from tomorrow onwards, so they needed to resupply and mend the broken and lost fixtures while it was also necessary for them to train on the newly acquired Age of Gods magic. However, while thinking he couldn't neglect his few remaining time with Myuu, Hajime dozed off on the bed.

* * *

Three days after that.

How strangely short distance between Lemia and Hajime made the bloodshot glares of envy from men of Sea-dweller tribe stabbed Hajime. The neighbourhood aunties were also gossiping about Hajime and Lemia. In addition, Yue and the girls' approach became even more intense as they became ill-humored. Yue at night was also becoming more lovely. Even so, Hajime completed the party's preparation and about to begin to search for «Meljeene Bottom Sea Ruin».

When the time come for them to part, Myuu wore a truly lonely expression. She greatly pulled Hajime's back hair, but he somehow managed shake her off on the pier and board the fixed submarine. Waving her hands, Myuu firmly shouted, "Papa, have a safe trip!" Following that, with an atmosphere that could neither be taken as

a joking nor a serious one, Lemia waved her hand saying, “Have a safe trip, D-A-R-L-I-N-G &#9825.”

From the side, they could be seen as wife and daughter who were sending the husband off to work. Sharp glares were coming from Yue and the girls behind him and the surrounding Sea-dweller tribe. It made Hajime slightly hesitant to return here after conquering the next dungeon.

Arifureta: Volume 10 Chapter 2

Chapter 92 of the Web Novel.

Meljeene Bottom Sea Ruin

Northwest, 300 kilometers away from【Sea Town, Elisen】.

It was the location of one of the Seven Great Dungeon, 【Meljeene Bottom Sea Ruin】, that the party once heard from Miledi Raisen.

However, the party didn't have much time to listen to Miledi at that time, so she only told them that the "moon" must be accompanied by "Guryuu-en's proof" without the detailed location.

And so, Hajime's party only advanced through the vast ocean in accordance to the direction and distance they were told. However, they didn't find anything when they searched the pointed location in the bottom of the sea during daytime. The party had thought they'd be able to find some kind of trace because it was a bottom sea ruin, but it seemed they were too naive.

The pointed location was rather shallow compared to the other place in circumference of 100 kilometers, so it must be the correct place… that was what Hajime thought.

Reluctantly, the party decided to stop the search and wait until night, when the moon has come out, as Miledi had told them. The

current time was sunset. The sun was shining in red with half of itself hidden beyond the horizon, brightening the world for the last time today. The sky and sea were dyed in orange while a straight road was produced by the reflection of the sun on the sea from over the horizon.

A beautiful spectacle of nature no matter whichever world it was. Hajime was watching the setting sun on the deck of the moored submarine. Abruptly, he thought of something unbelievable, which was whether it was possible to return to Japan if he advances on the road of light leading towards the sun. He smiled wryly as he was thinking about something.

“Did something happen?”

Noticing the change in Hajime, Kaori called out to him.

Because she was taking a shower inboard a while ago, her hair was damp. No, not only Kaori. Yue, Shia, and Tio had gone up to deck before he was aware of it. Everyone had taken the shower inside the sub that Hajime took pride in. Their flushed cheeks, the damp hair stuck on their cheeks, and nape, made their figures truly captivating. The water from the shower room was set to rain right from the ceiling, so it wasn’t a problem for the four of them to shower all at once.

Incidentally, the reason why Hajime was on the deck, looking at the sunset was because of the possibility of taken into the shower room if he was careless.

When the girls were about to take the shower, Tio invited Hajime which gained approval from Kaori, Shia, and of course, Yue. Then, the four cut off the escape routes of Hajime's refusal. Hajime, who will not embrace any other woman except Yue, had clearly said he won't have a naked skin ship with other woman.

However, the girls ignored Hajime as they smiled. Leering at Yue who was blushing while making a flirtatious smile, Kaori and Tio who were pinning Hajime from the sides, and while Shia tried to put Hajime unconscious using Doryukken from behind. Feeling the impending danger of his body, Hajime seriously ran away and went to the deck… but, isn't it a shame for a man to deny the placed meal before him?

Hajime thought that was a foolish question and shook his head, then he replied to Kaori.

"I am just recalling a little about Japan. After all, the scene here isn't that much different from there."

"… I see. Yeah, it really is. It is just like the evening sun I have seen in the sea before… somehow it makes me feel nostalgic. Though not even half a year had passed, eh."

"That's because the everyday here is too eventful."

Having seated beside Hajime, Kaori was agreeing Hajime's words while looking at the distance. She must be recalling the days she went through in Japan.

Maybe because she felt the loneliness from the conversation of the two, Yue trotted her still flushing body towards Hajime and sat on his lap. She entrusted her back to Hajime's chest even though she must be feeling hot. Then, she began to watch Hajime right under his face.

Her eyes were obviously expressing she wanted them to let her join their conversation. Yue was feeling lonely, and at the same time she wanted to hear about Hajime's hometown. Hajime, while inwardly knocked out by Yue's cuteness, stretched Kaori's cheek, who was sitting beside him, to scold her because a Hanya had appeared.

With only that, her mood became better which made Hajime felt complicated. Hajime thought, 'Why would she do this much for someone who won't accept her feelings…' Though he thought of that, he won't say it out loud. After all, it would be rude to her feelings if he did.

While he was stretching Kaori's cheek, and at this time, Shia drew closer to him from opposite Kaori with sparkling eyes. She was obviously signaling she wanted to be cared, too. With his empty other hand, he stroked Shia's rabbit ear. "Ehehe~," Shia made a relaxed smile.

His back was leaned to by Tio. She didn't demand anything in particular, just quietly sitting back to back against him. However, he understood Tio was relaxed, and she entrusted her weight to him. It was slightly unexpected, since Hajime's only thought was to throw her into the sea if she makes a perverted demand.

Then, maybe because she felt something from Hajime's aura, Tio's body shuddered and trembled for a moment while her breathing turned rough…

Hajime's party cuddled close to each other above the vast sea. It would take a while until night time came, and the moon will begin to shine. So to kill time, Hajime began to speak a little about his hometown.

Hajime's story fascinated Yue and the other two while Kaori was supplementing him with a radiant smile. Time passed swiftly as they enjoyed the peaceful atmosphere and the sun had completely gone down to the other side of the horizon, and the moon had began to shine in its place.

Thinking it was about the time, Hajime took out the pendant which was the proof of having conquered 【Guryuu-en Great Volcano】 from his breast pocket. The design of the pendant was of a woman hanging a lantern and there was a hole on the lantern, becoming hollow.

Even while staying at Elisen, Hajime had taken out the pendant and held it towards the moon, and also supplied it with magic power, but there was no change in particular.

'Just what should be done to the moon and pendant?', was what he thought while tilting his head. For now, Hajime tried to hold the pendant towards the moon. The moon could be seen from hole of the lantern design.

He waited for a while, but there was no change. Hajime, not understanding what to do, sighed and began to try another method.

But at that time, change appeared in the pendant.

“Waah, the light is gathering in the lantern. It’s beautiful～.”

“It is… a mysterious sight. Even though the lantern part is actually hollow…”

Shia was admiring the sight and Kaori, with shining eyes, agreed with her.

Just as the two said, the lantern part was absorbing the moonlight and light began to accumulate inside it. In accordance to that, the hollow part was filled by the light. Also becoming interested in it, Yue and Tio watched the pendant Hajime held up.

“Even though I’ve also tried it last night…”

“Hmm, Master. It might be because it won’t do if it isn’t here, right?”

It might be just as Tio guessed. Before long, the lantern finished accumulating the light and the pendant was now clad in light. At the same time, a light shot straight from the lantern, pointing to a

certain location on the sea's surface.

"… What an exquisite production. Truly different from Miledi's."

"It is. It really is fantasy-like, even I'm rather impressed by it."

"Guided by the moonlight," it was such a romance-like thing which made not only Hajime, but also Yue and the rest raised voices of admiration. The impression gained by Shia, just like Hajime and Yue, was strong as someone who had entered Miledi's 【Miledi Great Dungeon】.

The party didn't know how long the light would be released from the pendant's lantern, so the submarine immediately sailed, lead by the light.

The sea at night was dark. Or maybe it would be better to say that everything was black. And even though the surface of the was still bright because of the moonlight, they were lead into the waters and thus everything instantly turned dark. The light released by the submarine and the pendant was the only thing cutting through the dark sea.

The light, passing through the glass made from front crystal (a type of sturdy and transparent ore) in front of the submarine, was pointing at the bottom of the sea.

The location pointed was the rock wall zone of the bottom of the

sea. Numerous distorted rock walls were joined to form a mountain range. It was a place the party had searched during the daytime but it resulted in nothing… but when the submarine approached the rock pointed by the pendant's light, a tremor began to generated along with a strong rumbling sound.

The sound and tremor was caused by the rock wall that began to move. One of the rock's part was split in two, opening to the right and left like a door. The dark road lead inside was as though it was inviting one to the netherworld.

"I see… so that's why we can't find it no matter how much we tried. How foolish of me to think we will be able to find it if we were lucky."

"… There's no helping it, but it was fun."

"Yue is right. Don't you think it was an amazing experience to sightsee the bottom of the sea of this different world?"

Hajime's shoulders drooped as he understood the search they did during daytime was in vain, but it seemed Yue and Kaori quite enjoyed it.

Hajime moved the submarine and the party entered the crack. The pendant's lantern still had around half of its accumulated light, but it had stopped releasing the light. Only the submarine's light was shining inside the dark sea now.

“Umm~, this one had thought this since hearing about the bottom sea ruin, but wouldn’t it be impossible for ordinary people to enter this labyrinth without this “submarine” thing?”

“… It’s impossible unless one using a strong barrier.”

“It will also be impossible if they can’t control the air, light, and water current at the same time, eh.”

“But, it is necessary to conquer 【Guryuu-en Great Volcano】 to come here, so I think people who are capable of conquering the Great Dungeon are able to enter.

“Maybe we are supposed to use Spatial magic.”

Entering deeper on the underwater road, Hajime’s party were considering other ways to conquer this dungeon without a submarine. They were impressed by the fantastic entrance, but indeed, once they thought about it normally, unless there were several top class magic users, it was impossible to enter the dungeon. A troublesome point similar to the other Great Dungeons.

With caution, Hajime’s party watched the bottom sea through the front crystal.

And at that time,

FwwwOOOOooooosh~!!

“Uwoh!?”

“Nh!”

“Wawah!”

“Kyah!”

“What the—!?”

The side of the submarine suddenly received an impact and immediately, the submarine was thrown towards a direction. Just like the time they were thrown into the magma’s swift current, the submarine was turned around and around, but the party had already came up with a countermeasure for it. Using the gravity stone installed at the bottom of the submarine to increase the weight, the party stabilized the it.

“Uh, I don’t want to taste this twirling again~.”

Shia’s face paled as she recalled the time they got swept underground of【Guryuu-en Great Volcano】, and shook her head to stop recalling it.

“Didn’t we recover immediately? I already said it’ll be okay from now on. But more importantly, just where does this current led to…”

While smiling wryly at such a Shia, Hajime observed the outside through front crystal. The Green Light stone’s light was circulating around the dark cave, letting him pictured the surrounding. From what he could see, the party seemed to have been swept by the current into a huge round cave.

While operating the submarine, Hajime’s party advanced by following the current. After a while, the “Farsight stone” installed in the stern caught innumerable objects shining in reddish black.

“They seem to be approaching us… Well, they are most likely demonic beasts clad in reddish black magic power, huh.”

“… Shall we?”

When Hajime muttered, Yue, who was sitting by his side, was gathering magic power in her hand, and said in gangster-like tone, but she still looked cute.

“No, let’s use weapon here. I also want to confirm their effectiveness.”

Hajime operated the gimmick on the back of the submarine. Then, numerous pet-bottle sized torpedoes that had dyed Ancadi’s Oasis

in red, was launched. Hajime thoroughly painted them so they looked like smiling mischievously sharks.

Because they were inside the swift current, the torpedoes' propulsion could only move them to a small degree, and it resulted with them scattering like sea mines.

The submarine advanced ahead ,and before long, the numerous demonic beasts clad in reddish black magic power with appearance of flying fish entered the cluster of torpedoes.

BOOoOOoooOOoom!!!

Grand explosions generated in succession from behind the submarine and a large amount of bubbles wrapped the group of flying fish-lookalike. Afterwards, the bodies of flying fish-lookalike were tore apart by the impact and the flesh and blood were scattered from inside the appearing bubbles, looking like seaweed thrown into a swift current.

"Yup, it has more power than before. The improvement is a success."

"Uwaah~, Hajime-san. Just now, there was something with eyes of a fish being swept outside."

"Shia, those art actually dead fishes."

“Once again it makes me think the artifacts Hajime-kun made are a foul.”

From then on, Hajime’s party advanced while easily beating the flying fish-lookalike they frequently encountered.

They advanced without knowing how long it would be.

At that time they began to notice the sense of incompatibility of the unchanging scenery. Hajime’s party arrived at a place where the surrounding walls had been randomly destroyed. When they looked carefully, torn heads of flying fish-lookalike were placed between the rock walls with their hollow eyes looking at the sea.

“… Hmm, isn’t this the place we passed before?”

“… Seems so. Are we going in circles?”

Apparently, Hajime’s party were going in circles in an annulus ring cave. They had thought the Great Dungeon was ahead of them so they advanced, but Hajime was doubtful that he had mistaken a road here, as if it was a normal bottom sea cave. Resultantly, the party now didn’t advance according to the laid road, and carefully searched the surrounding for any clues.

As a result,

“Ah, Hajime-kun. There’s one there too!”

“With this, it is the fifth place…”

The party discovered several place inside the cave that were carved with fifty centimeters long crest of Meljeene. The carved crest of Meljeene was of pentagram with lines connected to each five points and the center was carved with crescent moon-like design. It was similar to the five places in this annulus ring cave.

For a thorough examination, Hajime’s party approached the crest they first discovered. Because they were exposed to the swift current, Hajime took care in controlling the submarine.

“Well, there are five places with pentagram, so if the remaining light inside the pendant is used…”

Muttering, Hajime took out the pendant he wore on his neck and held it before the front crystal. Then, the pendant reacted and light was released straight from the lantern. Following that, the light touched the crest and the crest shone.

“It will be disastrous for people who come here using magic… if they didn’t notice this immediately, their magic power would be depleted.”

Just as Kaori said, this RPG-like method would be too cruel for people who somehow survived only by maintaining their magic. It might be because the objective was to make them reach their limit in a different sense than 【Guryuu-en Great Volcano】.

Afterwards, three more crest in their own location was poured with light from the lantern, and the party arrived before the last crest. The light collected inside the lantern decreased when it was released to light up the crest, and the remaining light had enough for only one more usage.

Hajime held up the pendant and poured the last crest with the light, finally, a way to advance from this annulus ring cave opened. With a rumbling sound, the wall of the cave split in two.

Not much happened as the party advanced into the interior, but the water was descending right to below. Then, the submarine was wrapped with floating feeling as it was falling down.

“Ohh?”

“Nh.”

“Hyah!?”

“Nuoh.”

“Hauu!”

Respectively the five of them raised different scream. Hajime was enduring the floating feeling between his groin. Then, the submarine hit the hard ground with a roaring sound. The severe impact was transmitted into the interior, and Kaori whose body wasn’t that strong raised a groan.

“Kh… Kaori, are you okay?”

“Uhh, I-I’m okay. More importantly, here is?”

While frowning, Kaori looked at the outside through the front crystal, and unlike a while ago, the outside was not sea water but a cavity. Because there was no sign of demonic beast, Hajime’s party went outside.

Outside the submarine was a huge hemispherical space. When they looked above, there was a large hole, but they didn’t know what kind of principle caused the water’s surface to sway to and fro. Without any drop of water, it was swaying to and fro, and it was the place where Hajime’s party fallen to.

“Looks like here is the real thing. Rather than a bottom sea ruin, it is a cave though.”

“… It’s good that there isn’t water everywhere.”

Returning the submarine into “Treasure Box,” Hajime urged Yue and the others to advance into the passage they could be seen inside the cave… but he called out to Yue before the party moved.

“Yue.”

“Nn.”

With just that, Yue immediately created a barrier around them.

Momentarily, laser-like water current attacked them like meteors from above. The laser made of compressed water was similar to “Rupture” Yue used in 【Raisen Great Dungeon】. If one gets hit by it, a hole would be easily created in their body.

However, Yue’s barrier was extremely strong even if it was put cast in a hurry. As a proof, it easily blocked the incoming attack from above. Because Hajime promptly perceived the rise in magic power and killing intent, Yue who promptly answered him, the surprise attack was no longer a surprising one. Naturally, the moment Hajime called out to Yue, Shia and Tio had guessed the attack and was undisturbed by it.

However, Kaori didn’t react the same way as them.

“Kyaa!?”

The too sudden, and the intense attacks made her instinctively raised a scream. She immediately clung on Hajime who was beside her.

“I-I am sorry.”

“No, don’t mind it.”

Sneaking a glance at Hajime whom she parted from, Kaori would usually blushing here, but Kaori’s complexion didn’t look good. She seem to be a little depressed from exposing her disgraceful behavior when she clinged onto Hajime.

Also, she was once again shocked by Yue’s proficiency in magic.

When she was still with Kouki’s party, Kaori also used defense magic to assist Suzu. She trained hard, and her activation speed was not inferior to a “Barrier Master” like Suzu. Even so, when compared it to Yue, her defensive magic was child’s play.

She had felt “that” when Hajime’s party rescued them from 【Orcus Great Dungeon】, she understood, but she pushed her “inferiority complex” into the bottom of her mind because only when she could do that would she be able to stay by Hajime’s side. However, the question whether she would only be a burden crossed her mind again.

“Are you alright?”

“Eh? Ah, nothing. There’s nothing wrong.”

“… I see.”

Kaori immediately tried to deceive him by making a forced smile. Although Hajime slightly narrowed his eyes towards her action, he didn’t say anything.

His action made Kaori feel a little lonely, but relieved at the same time. Then, she noticed Yue, who continued to block the rain of dread, staring at her. Her eyes seem to see through Kaori’s heart, which made Kaori put strength in her eyes and stared back at Yue.

Kaori would not let her feelings be laughed at like that time. After all, if that happens, the pretty girl before her who received Hajime’s love would stop to recognize her as a threat.

That… was something she wouldn’t be able to endure.

Receiving Kaori’s powerful gaze, Yue smiled a little and once again looked above. At the same time, Tio fired her flame to burn the ceiling. With that, the culprit of the attack fell in a tatter.

It was a barnacle-like demonic beast. A lot of them were sticking on the ceiling, shooting “Rupture” from the hole above. A

physiological disgust-inviting spectacle.

Maybe because it was still an underwater creature, it was weak to flames and was immediately burnt by Tio's flame magic, "Spiral Flame."

After defeating those barnacle-lookalike, Hajime's party walked into the passage. They went lower than the previous room, and even the seawater reached their thighs.

"Ah~, it's hard to walk…"

"… Should I get off?"

With splashing sound as they advance through the seawater, Hajime started to complain. And so, Yue, who was sitting on his shoulder, asked. Yue was carried by Hajime because with her height, she would be soaked faster than anyone else.

Hajime returned a gaze saying there's no problem while he ignoring Kaori's and Shia's envying gaz. Then, he put his hand on Yue's thigh so she would not fall, firmly fixing her in place. Yue was also wrapping her hand around Hajime's neck.

Kaori and Shia were sending even more and more envying gazes, but they were now focusing on another problem; an attack from demonic beasts.

The appearing demonic beasts looked like shurikens. They moved in a straight line towards their target while rotating in high-speed, but sometimes they also curved on the fly. Hajime smoothly pulled Donner and unhesitatingly fired, shooting down everything in the air. Although some died with their bodies still intact, the dead demonic beasts which floated on the surface of water had a shape of a starfish.

In addition, having perceived sea snake-like demonic beasts swimming fast in the water below them, Yue skewered them using spear of ice.

"… Aren't they too weak?"

Except Kaori, all of the party members agreed with Hajime's mutter.

Enemies inside a Great Dungeon were theoretically strong individually and became troublesome if more than one appeared. However, the starfishes and sea snakes were similar to the demonic beasts who attacked them in the sea once they got out of the sea volcano, or at least that weak. Truly unbefitting of a Great Dungeon's demonic beast.

Excluding Kaori who didn't know much about Great Dungeon, everyone was tilting their heads, but their answer would be shown inside the huge space on the other end of the passage.

“…The heck?”

As soon as Hajime’s party entered the space, translucent jelly-like body blocked the entrance to the passage.

“Let me do it! Uryaaah!!”

Immediately, Shia, who was at the rear, swung Doryukken to break the wall. However, the surface only scattered, but the jelly-like wall didn’t break. Following that, the scattered remains stuck on Shia’s breasts.

“Hyaa! What’s with this thing!?”

Shia raised a voice of confusion and shock. When Hajime’s party turned around, the clothing around Shia’s breasts was melting. The jelly thing wrapped around her clothing and undergarment, and Shia’s voluptuous twin hills began to become more and more exposed.

“Shia, don’t move!”

Immediately, Tio perfectly burnt the sprayed jelly-thingy. A little part of Shia’s breasts where the jelly was attached to was swollen red. It looked like the jelly blocking the entrance had a rather strong acidity.

“Kh! There’s more coming!”

Hajime warned, and right after they moved away from the wall of jelly, numerous tentacles attacked from above. They looked sharp like spears, but their appearance was similar to the jelly that was blocking the entrance.

“Honestly, the combination of Yue as defense and Tio as offence feels like a foul play.”

An impregnable defense and at the same time a one-sided offense. That’s why Hajime could do nothing but mutter so. Seeing it as a chance, Shia was slowly approaching Hajime’s side while empathizing her exposed cleavage. Truly sly, as she began to pleading with upward glance while blushing.

“Excuse me, Hajime-san. It’s burnt, so can Hajime-san rub it with medicine?”

“… Sigh, don’t you see our situation?”

“Well, I think it’ll be okay because Yue-san and Tio-san are unbeatable… Also, if I don’t do some appeal in this situation, I will be overshadowed by Kaori-san too…”

Shia said while approaching Hajime to show off the burn on her cleavage.

Then,

“Bring the holy ground and healing unto this place ‘Heaven’s Blessing.'”

Kaori healed Shia’s injury while smiling nicely. “Ahh～, even though it was a chance to get my breasts touched!,” Shia grieved while everyone was looked at her coldly.

“Hm? …Hajime, these jelly seems to melt magic, too.”

While he was giving the grieving Shia a cold look, Yue said to him. When he looked at it, he could see parts of Yue’s barrier melting.

“Mhm, this one thought so. This one felt it was strange that the previous flame lost its force. It seems it even melt the magic power inside the flame.”

If what Tio said was right, then these jelly was capable of melting magic power. It was a strong and troublesome ability. Suitable for a Great Dungeon’s demonic beast.

Though it must haven’t heard what Hajime thought of it in his mind, finally, a figure of a demonic beast that was manipulating the jelly had appeared.

The thing appeared as it was permeating through the small cracks in the ceiling, halted in mid-air, and began to reshape. A translucent humanoid with fin-like limbs, and its whole body carried innumerable specks sparkling in red with two feelers-like thing growing on its head. The figure that was swimming mid-air with its fin-like limbs was just like a Clione. Well, a ten meters tall Clione was nothing but a monster, after all.

Without any preliminary movement, tentacles were shot out from the Clione's huge body. At the same time, jelly was spraying from its head just like a shower.

"Yue, attack it, too! Leave the defense to me! "Divine Interruption"!"

Using the derived skill, "Delayed Activation", Kaori activated the "Divine Interruption" she chanted beforehand. Nodding at Kaori, Yue went to Tio, and together they fired flame towards the huge Clione. Shia also changed Doryukken to firing mode and shot it.

The Clione was hit by all of their attacks, and its body exploded and scattered in all directions. One hit kill!, Yue and the other two raised a satisfied expression, but Hajime let out a warning to them.

"Not yet! Its presence is still here. Kaori, maintain the barrier… What's with this, the demonic beast's presence is all over the room…"

Hajime's perception abilities caught the presence of the demonic beast all over the room. Moreover, everywhere his Magic Eye see

was dyed in reddish black color, as if the demonic beast was the room itself. It was a situation he had never encountered before, so naturally Hajime's eyes sharpened.

Right after, as if to sense his anxiety, the Clione that was scattered in all directions was regenerated in no time. Moreover, on its belly were the starfish-lookalike and sea snakes they encountered and defeated. They melted while raising sizzling sound.

"Hmm, it seems the demonic beasts this one thought as weak were truly ordinary demonic beasts, and they seem to be this guy's meal… Master. It doesn't matter if it keeps regenerating. But where is its magic stone?"

"Now that Tio-san mentioned it, why can't I see the magic stone although it is transparent?"

Agreeing to Tio's assumption, Shia was now looking at Hajime, but Hajime had a troubled expression while he looked for the location of magic stone of the huge Clione.

"… Hajime?" When Yue called him, Hajime scratched his head and reported what he saw.

"… None. That guy doesn't have magic stone."

His words made everyone dumbfounded.

“H-Hajime-kun? For it to not have magic stone… Then, does it mean it isn’t a demonic beast?”

“I don’t know. However, if I must say, that jelly’s body, all of them are magic stone. My Magic Eye saw that guy’s whole body is dyed in reddish black color. Also, be careful since this whole room is also dyed in the same color. Or maybe we are already inside that guy’s stomach.”

The same time Hajime told them about the shocking fact, the huge Clione began to attack them again. This time, not only did the tentacles attack while the jelly rained down, but its feet entered the sea water and some parts of its body were fired like a torpedo.

Hajime took out a black, large rifle from the “Treasure Box.” The large rifle had a gas cylinder thing installed where the magazine should be loaded, and also an unbelievably large caliber.

That was natural. After all, it wasn’t a rifle…

FWOOOOSH!!

It was a flamethrower. The Flame ore in tar form made the flamethrower sprayed flame of 3,000 ˚C. It was not aimed at the huge Clione, and neither at the tentacles nor the sprayed jelly. It was aiming at the “wall” that was giving reddish black reaction. The Clione was left to Yue and the other two.

Maybe because the huge Clione had a mimetic ability, the wall seemed to be not out of ordinary, but the flame released by Hajime burnt it and peel it off from the wall just like a wallpaper. Hajime was slightly relieved the one on the wall was not another huge Clione.

However, the transparent jelly kept appearing from the cracks on the wall no matter how much he burnt it, and finally it even appeared from under his feet. His shoe soles generated sizzling sound.

The attack on the real body by Yue and the other two was also increasing in intensity, and even the huge Clione seem to have finally gotten serious as jelly sprung up from the entire wall with a tremendous momentum. Moreover, the water level had raised before the party were aware of it. At first, it was around the thigh level, but now it has risen to around the waist. As for Yue, her chest area was already soaked by the water.

Yue and the other two had defeated the huge Clione so many times, but the surrounding jelly immediately gathered, and the end of the fight was nowhere in sight.

It was a terrible situation if they didn't find a way to defeat it, and they would die by drowning. While their fighting power was being reduced, they wouldn't be able to keep besieging the huge Clione. Even if they cast barrier magic and entered the submarine, it would melt unless they find the way to defeat it.

As such, Hajime decided to withdraw. However, all of the passages

had been blocked by the jelly. Hajime frantically looked around. Then, he discovered a crack on the ground which generated a whirl.

“I will at least recover us from this situation. There’s also a place under the ground. Well, I don’t know where it is connected to, so brace yourselves!”

“Nh.”

“Yes～.”

“Understood.”

“Okay!”

Receiving everyone’s answer, Hajime, while turning the flamethrower around to burn the incoming jelly, used “Transmutation” towards the crack. The crack was forced to expand and gradually, a deep hole was opened.

While still underwater, Hajime took out a cylinder with length of 15 cm and diameter of 3 cm. In the middle was the mouthpiece part of a snorkel tube. It was small oxygen cylinder. It was created using the ore imbued with Spatial magic using Creation magic. Thus, the space inside where the oxygen was put into, expanded just like “Treasure Box.”

However, while he was making preparation in Elisen, Hajime had prioritized the broken and lost equipment. In addition, it was hard for him to use Spatial magic so the space created was much narrower compared to “Treasure Box.” Because of that, these small oxygen cylinder can only hold out for around 30 minutes.

Setting the time limitation in the corner of his mind, Hajime repeatedly “transmuted” the water, and before long, Hajime took out pile bunker from “Treasure Box” once there was no more reaction on the ground. After fixing the anchor under the water, it charged.

Screeech～!!!

Following that, he pulled the trigger to break the floor.

KABOooOOOOoom～!!!

Inside the water, a muffled thundering sound generated and spread with vibration.

In the next moment, water flowed into the penetrated hole with tremendous momentum. The seawater that had reached around the waist began to flow mightily all of a sudden, which resulted in Yue and the other three to be swept and thrown into the hole.

Inside the swift current, Hajime desperately braced against the current and took out a gigantic boulder and numerous incendiary grenades from “Treasure Box.” Then, he threw them at the same time he was swept into the space below alongside with Yue and the other three.

Behind him, muffled roaring sounds rang out. However, he was unable to confirm whether he was successful in gaining even a little time against the huge Clione’s pursuit.

Arifureta: Volume 10 Chapter 3

Chapter 93 of the Web Novel.

Inferiority Complex

“Cough, cough, ugh.”

“Huff huff, are you okay, Kaori?”

“Y-Yeah, somehow… Everyone is…”

In front of Kaori, who was coughing from drinking a large amount of seawater, were Hajime, whose hand was coiled on her waist, and a pure-white sand beach. There was nothing else beside those around her, but she could densely see packed mangrove-like trees in the distance, and the surface of the waving sea high in the sky. The seawater was like a barrier, preventing any intruder. It was a vast space.

“Looks like we are getting separated… Well, I gave everyone a smaller version of “Treasure Box,” so they should be able to do something by themselves.”

“… Nn.”

Hajime lightly said after letting go of Kaori, and fixed his hair. However, Kaori's mind seems to be somewhere else.

While watching Hajime stand up and began to change his clothing, Kaori recalled what happened a while ago.

Hajime's party attempted a strategic retreat from the huge Clione.

The place they fell into was a gigantic, spherical space with tens of tunnels, where there were spouting seawater with tremendous force. Or maybe it could be said that they were flowing from there; a place with storm-like and messy current.

Swept by the swift current, Hajime's party somehow managed to stick close together, but next the current mercilessly separated the party. Yue tried to control the current with magic, but it didn't work well because the current was too random. Shia controlled the weight of Doryukken in cooperation with Tio; a fine play.

Hajime had actually wanted to take out the submarine and ride it, but it was impossible inside the swift current. Clenching his teeth, Hajime took out ultra-heavy, compression ore, and tried to use the weight to overcome the current just like Shia.

At that time, by luck, he saw Yue getting swept towards him, and Yue would meet up with Hajime thanks to the current. Shia and Tio had already disappeared into a tunnel somewhere, and their figures could no longer be seen inside the space.

Hajime tried to reach out to Yue so she wouldn't get separated from him, but Kaori's figure was being swept to the lower side had entered his view. The pained gaze of Kaori's met Hajime's. He previously reached out to Yue before him, but his and Kaori's gaze had indeed met.

There were two choices.

If he catches Yue, Kaori would be swept alone into a tunnel. The same thing would happen to Yue if he was to catch Kaori. The current Hajime could only choose one of them. Within that moment, it felt like eternity. Hajime exchanged gazes with Yue, and he made a decision.

Using the weight from the ultra heavy compressed ore he took out from "Treasure Box," Hajime rushed below, and then he caught Kaori. Kaori's eyes were wide in surprise, but the two were immediately exposed to an even stronger swift current. Together, the two were thrown into a tunnel.

While being swept away, Hajime activated "Vajra" to protect Kaori in his arms, enduring it even when he was thrown at a rock wall. Then, he was able to see light coming from above once the current weakened and went up.

And there was the pure white sandy beach spreaded across the coastline.

"… Nee, Hajime-kun. Why… why did you save me?"

“Hah?”

Kaori questioned Hajime whose back was turned towards her. Hajime only tilted his head, thinking “what kind of question was that?”

“Why did you save me and not Yue?”

“Well, Kaori seemed to be dying and Yue can do something by herself. Yue’s eyes also told me to save Kaori.”

“… You really trust her, eh.”

“Isn’t that natural? We are partners, you know?”

“…”

The already depressed Kaori was even more depressed after hearing the answer. Suddenly, a shadow stretched over the downcast Kaori.

Puzzled, Kaori looked up and there was Hajime’s face very close to her own. His eyes and nose were right before her. A distance that would conclude in a kiss if he move even a little closer. Kaori felt as if she was sucked by Hajime’s eyes, and suddenly, her cheeks

were pulled.

“Ift huwt! Waft au uing!” Kaori protested with teary eyes.

However, Hajime ignored Kaori’s protest and played with her soft cheeks without reserve for a while. After finally being released, Kaori looked up with a reproachful gaze while rubbing her red cheeks, but Hajime only snorted with “Hmph”.

“If you have time to be depressed, then it’s better to use and move. We’re inside a Great Dungeon, you know? Just until when will you stay wet like this? Or, are you trying to gain my sympathy?”

Hajime’s sharp words made Kaori’s face instantly reddened. It was of shame. She noticed what he unexpressed said, isn’t this the wrong place for that?

“Th-There’s no such a thing! I was just daydreaming. I-I will change my clothes soon. Sorry.”

“…”

Kaori hurriedly stood up and began to take off her clothes after taking out substitute clothes from mini-“Treasure Box” (around the size of a house’s storage) that was given to her before the party left Elisen. Hajime nonchalantly turned his back towards her. The normal Kaori would do an approach by saying, “It’s okay to watch,” though embarrassed, but the current Kaori hurriedly

finished changing her clothes without saying anything.

“I-I am done… So, what should we do?”

“Let’s see… Even if we go to seabed again, we still don’t know where the others are… but there’s nothing we can do other than keep searching. Those girls would probably do so as well.”

After looking at the jungle nearby, Hajime turned around. Kaori nodded at him while smiling; a smile hiding her depressed heart. Hajime slightly narrowed his eyes at Kaori’s smile, but he didn’t say anything in the end and started to walk.

Advancing along the pure-white sandy beach, creating sounds as they walked, the two entered the jungle. The dense trees and bushes were cut by Hajime. Kaori was only following him from behind.

Then, Hajime suddenly halted and turned towards Kaori, put his hand on the back of Kaori’s head as if to embrace her.

“Fue? Ah, umm, Hajime-kun? Wh-What’s with this sudden…”

Kaori blushed, but Hajime immediately separated and she instantly paled when she saw the thing on Hajime’s hand.

It was a spider. With size almost as big as a palm, it was moving its

twelve legs with violet liquid dripping from it. Some of the legs grew like a normal spider while some grew from its back; a structure expressing it was capable of moving using both sides! It looked disgusting.

“Don’t let your guard down, okay? A Great Dungeon is vastly different compared to the surface of Orcus. Don’t think of it as the same or else you’ll experience pain.”

“U-Un. Sorry. I will be careful.”

“…”

The spider Hajime caught didn’t have magic stone, a normal poisonous spider. The fact that she was almost killed by creature other than a demonic beast, and how Hajime helped her, made Kaori even more depressed.

When she was still in Kouki’s party, she was an all-rounder, however, in Hajime’s party, she isn’t at all useful. It made Kaori panic more and more inwardly.

As such, Kaori put even more attention towards the surroundings which caused the conversation between the two to lessen, and they got out of the jungle with a subtle atmosphere between them.

Ahead of them was…

“This… isn’t this the so-called ship’s graveyard?”

“Amazing… those are sailing ships, but the size…”

In the rocky area ahead of the jungle were several partly rotted sailing ships lodged. The sailing ships were around a hundred meters in length at the lowest, and in the far distant was an even bigger one with at least three hundred meters in length.

The bizarre spectacle made Hajime and Kaori unconsciously halted their advance. However, it didn’t take a long time for Hajime and Kaori to regain their senses and entered the ship’s graveyard.

They advanced by passing through the gaps between rocks, sometimes passing over them, while at other times, they walked on the ships.

“Even so… there are only battleships here.”

“Un. But only the biggest one there seems to be a passenger boat. It has luxurious decorations on it…”

The ships in this graveyard didn’t have cannons located at the starboard side like those battleship (sail-type) on earth. Even so, Hajime was able to conclude they were battleships because there were marks of fierce battle on all of the ships. From the appearance

of the ships, they seemed to have received magic attacks. Some have their masts cleanly cut, burnt, carbonized decks, and petrified ropes and nets.

They didn't have any cannon, so they used long-ranged magic to defeat the enemies which was a battle method imaginable from the marks remained.

Then, Hajime's guess was proven to be a fact when he and Kaori were halfway through the ship's graveyard.

— UoOOOOOOOOOOOOO!!!!

— WAaAAAAAAAAAAAAAAA!!!!

"-!? What the!?"

"Hajime-kun! The surroundings are—!"

When they felt they heard shout of many men all of a sudden, the surroundings scenery began to distort. Hajime and Kaori stopped walking from the surprise and they observed the surroundings to observe what was happening. The surrounding distortion became even more intense and before they were aware of it, Hajime and Kaori were already on a ship's deck, above the vast ocean.

Following that, they looked at their surroundings, it was not the

ship's graveyard, but hundreds of sailing ships divided into two groups, confronting each other. Above the ships were people raising their weapons while shouting.

"Th-The heck is this…"

"Ha-Ha-Hajime-kun? Am I currently inside a dream? Hajime-kun, you are here, right? Right?"

Both Hajime and Kaori were taken aback, but they somehow managed to get out of their confusion, however, they weren't able to look at their surroundings.

While they did so, a big spark rose into the sky, generating firework-like loud voices followed by the hundreds of ships moving out simultaneously. The fleet on the side of the ship Hajime and Kaori rode on also moved out after the firework rose.

And when the ships approached a certain distance, they used the momentum to ram the other ships used its bodies, while magic were also fired.

GOoOOOOOOOO!!

DOoGAaAAAN!!

DOBAaAAAA!!!

"Owh!?"

“Kyaa!”

Flame bullets fired accompanied by roaring sounds and created holes in the ships’ bodies. Huge tornadoes advanced aiming at the masts. The sea’s surface froze, stopping the ships. And bullets of gray-colored sphere instantly petrified everything.

Even the deck Hajime and Kaori were on was hit by the flame bullets and began to blaze up grandly. The ship’s crews immediately activated magic to draw up the sea water and extinguished the fire.

It was literally a battlefield where innumerable people and ships fought on. The fired magic clad in killing intent grazed their skins.

Hajime and Kaori absentmindedly watching these spectacle, and once again fire bullets fired from behind them. The bullets’ courses were aimed straight towards Hajime and Kaori.

Hajime buried his question of why did they suddenly were involved in this war in his head, and he pulled out Donner because it was OK to kill everyone because they attacked first. Thus, he intercepted the fire bullets using the railgun.

The bullet fired was accompanied by explosive sound and a flash, but unexpectedly it didn’t even hit the flame bullets much more intercepting them. The bullet flew into the sky, and it disappeared.

“What!?”

Raising surprised voice for the nth times, Hajime embraced Kaori by his side and began to evade.

“Wait, I will obstruct them! “Light Severance”!”

With Kaori’s chant, the beginner-level defense magic of light attribute appeared.

Hajime tried to evade because the unknown magic kept going even after their cores were hit, but Kaori had activated her magic and couldn’t move away from there. Reluctantly, he activated “Vajra” and waited for the flame bullets.

However, Hajime’s worry proved to be groundless because Kaori’s barrier completely blocked the flame bullets. With dubious expression, Hajime thought whether he just misfired while tilting his head, and he once again fired at the incoming flame bullets. Even this time, Hajime’s Magic Eye indeed saw the cores being hit, but the bullet just passed through the flame bullets and flew towards the day after tomorrow..

“… Is that it?”

Seeing that, Hajime was guessing why his attack wasn’t effective and decided to try another method of attacking. Kaori tried to put up another barrier to block the incoming flame bullets, but Hajime

stopped her and activated “Wind Claw” in Donner. Following that, he evaded, and at the same time, he slashed the flame bullets using “Wind Claw.” This time, the flame bullets didn’t pass through and slashed in two.

“Umm, Hajime-kun?”

“It doesn’t seem to be an illusion nor was it a real thing. The physical attack didn’t effective, but attacks that contained magic power are effective. Good grief, what’s with this situation.”

Hajime spat a sigh from this troublesome situation and “Gwaa,” an agonized voice rang right from behind him. While wondering what it was, he turned around and there was a young man crouching while suppressing his abdomen, while his other hand was holding a cutlass. Looking carefully, there was a pool of blood below him and blood covered icicle rolling nearby. He must have been shot with the icicle.

“Are you okay!?,” Kaori immediately raised her voice while approaching him, and then she used her healing magic. A pure-white light released from her and wrapped the man. He should be healed in a blink of an eye because Kaori was a “Healer”… or so she thought, but the result was unexpected. The moment the young man received Kaori’s healing magic, he turned into light particles and disappeared.

“Eh? Eh? W-Why…” After a little pondering, Hajime told the confused Kaori what he thought had happened.

“Wasn’t it because the effect and attribute of the magic didn’t matter as long as it carried magic power?”

“… Then, I-I just… killed that person…”

“Kaori, this is not reality. Just think of it as “an illusion where we can move freely.” Besides, you can’t call something that disappeared by being healed a human.”

“Hajime-kun… un, you are right. I am sorry that I was confused a little there. But I am okay now.”

Though slight, Hajime said words of concern to Kaori. However, Kaori didn’t feel happy like the usual her, only drooping her shoulders apologizing. Then, she smiled to smooth things over. Seeing her reaction made Hajime inadvertently muttered the thing he had thought since earlier.

“… You keep apologizing, eh.”

“Eh? Did you say something?”

“No, nothing.” Hajime moved his gaze from Kaori.

It was not because of the subtle atmosphere drifting around Kaori, but because he felt ominous presences. When he looked around, the soldiers were shouting and attacking the nearby ships, and

before they were aware of it, several men with dark gazes were looking at Hajime and Kaori.

Kaori noticed Hajime's gaze and looked at the direction he was watching, and the men immediately came to attack Hajime and Kaori.

"For the God!"

"Long live! Eht-samaa!"

"Pagans! Die for our God!"

They were in frenzy. With bloodshot eyes, they declared while scattering saliva around. Completely abnormal.

He was able to guess it was a war between countries from how the fleets looked like, and he finally understood the reason for it. It was a religious war. If he strained his ears, he could hear the other soldiers in the other fleets were shouting similar things. However, they were shouting different God's name.

Kaori could only stand in blank surprise inside the frenzied atmosphere.

Embracing Kaori from behind, Hajime thrust out and fired Donner over his shoulder. Only, the fired thing was not a bullet but mass of

pure magic power. Using “Magic Power Compression” and “Magic Power Emission” derived from “Magic Power Manipulation,” he was able to blow off magic power without affecting the target physically. In a sense, it was a flawless technique to disarm the target because human and even demonic beast wouldn’t be able to move if their magic power was exhausted. This move had always been kept inside of him because he would not use such a lukewarm method on his enemy.

However, this lukewarm method was the most useful in this situation. The bright red bullet fired by Donner momentarily cut through the space and pierced the forehead of one of the frenzied, cutlass swinging soldier. Without stopping, the bullet hit the soldier behind the previous one, too, and their bodies instantly dispersed.

“Kaori! We are going to jump! Don’t bite your tongue!”

“Eh? —Kyaaaaa!!”

It would be troublesome if they were surrounded on the deck, so Hajime jumped using “Aerodynamic” while embracing Kaori. Kaori screamed from the powerful momentum.

Kicking the soldier on the crow’s nest, Hajime landed in one of four crow’s nest on the masts.

Below them, the frenzied soldiers were looking up at Hajime and Kaori with bloodshot eyes.

Even though there were the enemies from other countries, too, somehow some of the men were targeting Hajime and Kaori. Moreover, the ones targeting them didn't have any distinction between allies and enemies. Their numbers keeps increasing one after another just like a bad case of contagious virus.

Before even a moment passed and in front of their own enemies, the soldiers suddenly stopped moving and twisted their heads, staring at Hajime and Kaori. They immediately came crowding towards the two like a horror movie. The frenzied air even made Kaori pale.

"Now then, what shall we do to get out of this disgusting space?"

"… Maybe there's something like… an exit?"

"We are in the middle of the sea, you know?"

"Maybe there's an exit in one of these ships? … see, something like wherever door."

Kaori recalled and compared it to the convenient tool of the blue cat robot. Looking at the surroundings, Hajime frowned and objected her idea because the ships were too numerous.

"… From what I can see, there's at least six hundred ships here… it's impossible to search one by one. Don't you think we'll be able to find the exit faster if the war ended?"

“Umm~, indeed, there are also the sunken ship… Then, shall we… end the war?”

“End it… I see, time to kill everyone, huh? Kaori also can say something extreme, eh.”

“Eh? Umm, I don’t mean that…”

“Yup, that must be it. No other thing comes to my mind, and I like it better this way.”

Firing bullets of magic power and shooting through the several soldiers climbing using the ropes on the mast, Hajime thought it would be better if he had make a magic gun. He thought so while he continued firing the bright red bullets along with “Remote Control” derived from “Magic Power Manipulation,” making them intercepted the incoming flame bullets.

“Kaori, I know you aren’t proficient in offensive magic, but even healing magic becomes offensive magic here. And even if we don’t know how to escape from here, it is the truth that we are being attacked, so let’s knock them all down.”

“O-Okay!”

Hearing Hajime’s words, Kaori began her chant with resolute

expression while trembling. The frenzied battlefield seemed to shave off at Kaori's mind, but she absolutely didn't want to show a disgraceful behavior to the important one beside her.

Hajime was glaring at the surroundings as if protecting her.

Looking down, allies and foes were mixed as they boarded the ship, killing each other. Unlike what happened when Hajime and Kaori attacked, the killing in this illusion was full of bloodshed.

On the deck were someone's entrails, cut limbs, and splattered heads. Everyone was repeatedly shouting "For the God," "Pagan," and "Divine Punishment," with frenzied eyes as they spread killing intent.

Within the fresh blood of the soldiers scattered just like a storm of cherry blossom, the crow's nest where Hajime and Kaori, no, it was more like the soldiers were obstinately targeting Hajime and Kaori.

Time to time, bright red bullets flew about in all directions, shooting through the enemies. Furthermore, they flew around Hajime and Kaori to protect them, positioned as both offense and defense at the same time.

However, the frenzied soldiers weren't even worried, repeatedly attempted suicide attacks. Tens of the soldiers used flight magic while there were those who approached by going from one mast to another. It could be seen that the fight was concentrated on the ship where Hajime and Kaori rode. Hajime's Magic Eye also caught the fluctuation of magic power of highest-ranked magic from the

hand of the magicians aiming at them.

At the time, Hajime thought of sniping them, but Kaori's chant ended and she activated highest-ranked magic of her.

"— — people, held out your arms as this is the place where Holy Mother smiling at, "Scripture"!"

Then, ripple of light spread into the battlefield with Kaori as its center.

The ripple throbbed as it expanded for so so many times, reaching one kilometer in radius. The enemy who touched by the ripple was wrapped by light.

Highest-ranked healing magic of light attribute, "Scripture."

It was a super wide-ranged healing magic with effect of healing everyone inside its area. The range itself was depended on the amount of user's magic power and proficiency, but at its worst, its effective range was 500 meters in radius. Moreover, if the user gave out the "sign" beforehand, it would be able to heal specific object. And normally this magic was used with tens of magician, and took a lot of time to chant along with its stupidly gigantic magic array. To be able to activate it in only one, two minutes alone was impossible unless one was a cheat-like character.

At the same time the light of "Scripture" activated by Kaori

wrapped the battlefield, all soldiers inside the effective area had their bodies dispersed without distinction of ally or foe. When the magic ended, Kaori's body tilted from magic power exhaustion, and was thus promptly supported by Hajime.

"Ohh, a mass reproduction of the Mary Celeste, huh. You did great, Kaori. No, should I say as expected of you?"

"Ah, uh, th-there's no such a thing. Hajime-kun and the others are far more amazing…"

Honest praise from Hajime made Kaori's cheeks blush from embarrassed. She made a self-ridiculing smile as she thought Yue would be able to use more powerful magic quickly. Then, she muttered ""Replenish,"" to replenish the lost magic power from the pendant given by Hajime. Hajime had improved the pendant with magic array and the ability of taking out the stocked magic power by chanting because Kaori was incapable of directly manipulating magic power.

Hajime slightly knitted his eyebrows and wanted to say something when he saw Kaori's expression, but he put it aside for now because he had to deal with the new incoming enemies. The battle had restarted.

With the ineffectiveness of physical attack, it was a situation where the large amount of soldiers didn't falter against any kind of attack as they battled on the ship. Normally, it might be a hard situation, but there were cheat-like monsters present.

Big fleets of two countries were afterwards annihilated by the two humans in a span of one hour.

* * *

“… Uuh, cough, kafh, sorr-…”

“It’s alright. Just endure it.”

Immediately after the last soldiers were annihilated, their surroundings were once again distorted. They noticed that they had returned to ship’s graveyard from before.

Wondering if the annihilation was indeed the correct answer, Kaori immediately sighed in relief, ran to the nearby rock, and vomited. However, she vomited nothing since the dinner she ate had already been digested, and thus she felt a pain from trying to vomit.

With tears accumulated in the corner of her eyes, Kaori used one hand to tell Hajime “Don’t come,” to stop him.

However, Hajime still approached her and rubbed her back. Kaori didn’t want to show such a pitiful sight to him, but she felt comforted from the gentle and warm feelings transmitted to her back. Her nausea and spirit gradually recovered.

Hajime took out apple juice-like drink from “Treasure Box” and

presented it to her. Kaori obediently drink it heartily and her energy returned. The sweet and fresh taste, flushed the sour taste of gastric juice.

“Sorry…”

Kaori who knitted her eyebrows and apologized for the trouble made Hajime narrowed his eyes.

“Well, I think it is inevitable. Even I feel disgusted by it. I never thought humans would be so frenzied because of their blind belief. …Anyway, let’s rest for now. Even I want to recover my considerably used magic power.”

“… Un. Say, Hajime-kun. What was that illusion? Is it related to these ship wreckages.”

Kaori stood up then sat on the nearby rock, and then she asked him. Hajime took a little time to think before told her his conjecture.

“It is just a maybe, but I think the illusion might have been reproducing a battle in the past. … well, it seemed there’s also some improvement to attack those challenging the dungeon… or it might have been the concept of this dungeon.”

“Concept?”

“Yeah. Tio said it when we were in “Guryuu-en Great Volcano”. She said ‘isn’t it possible that each of the dungeon had its own concept prepared by the “Liberators”?’ If that’s true, then here is…”

“…To know the misery brought by the Mad Gods… maybe?”

“Aah, I think so, too.”

Continuing Hajime’s words by muttering the answer, Kaori recalled the spectacle from before, her face once again turned pale, and her body trembled as if she was suffering from a cold.

What made Kaori felt sick was the madness from the soldiers. Their behavior and speech were exactly of those so called “Fanatic” while she also couldn’t help but feel disgusted from the killing.

The people continued to laugh loudly in a frenzy even when blood were spraying from their bodied. There were even those who died from gouging their own hearts out, raised it towards the sky as an offering to their Gods. There was also an older brother who stabbed through his own younger brother just to attack Hajime and Kaori, while the younger one laughed proudly. War itself was a place filled with madness, but one they just saw was far too ghastly. And it was wage all “For our God,” so…

Seeing Kaori covering her mouth because she couldn’t endure it, Hajime sat right beside Kaori and grasped Kaori’s hand. He

couldn't leave Kaori, who sickened by the madness, alone. Kaori was slightly surprised, looked at Hajime, relaxed, and squeezed Hajime's hand back.

"Hajime-kun, thank you…"

"Don't mind it. I understand… the pain from being exposed to the madness. I felt that when I fell into the abyss…"

"… Then, how? … Wait, there's no need for you to answer… It was… Yue-san, right?"

"Yeah, it was because of her. If I hadn't met her inside the abyss… I wonder how I would have ended up."

Hajime looked into the distance in affection and nostalgia. He was surely recalling the time he met Yue. Seeing his expression made Kaori felt her chest squeeze.

"It's mortifying. To defend, to protect Hajime-kun… I wanted to do that. But even if I said that, it's not like I can do anything. Since it's me… who I couldn't even protect a promise. Ah~, Yue is a really powerful enemy~."

Kaori joking laughter made Hajime narrowed his eyes again. Kaori's smile was not the usual warm, positive smile because it might have also included self-torment and self-ridicule.

“… You’ve been apologizing since we came here, and don’t make such a smile.”

“Eh? Ummm…”

Hajime’s sudden words made Kaori raised “?” above her head. However, her smile immediately collapsed and her expression stiffened from Hajime’s next words.

“… Listen, Kaori. Why did you follow us here?”

“… That’s… am I just a burden after all?”

The downcast Kaori made Hajime sigh, and he didn’t answer her question.

“I remember the talk we had under the moonlight while drinking that disgusting tea that day. That’s why, honestly, I don’t think it’s weird that you have goodwill for the current me.”

“Hajime-kun, I…”

“However, I have no intention of denying it. I am sure Kaori had things only you can see, and that’s what stirred your heart. Thus, there’s no meaning for me to deny the decision you made. I have

given you my answer, “even so” I think it’s a good thing that you favor me. Even Shia didn’t even feel discouraged. Rather, she recently made me seriously worry if she was going to attack me in my sleep.”

Hajime recently felt the dread as he thought of the rabbit-eared girl with bugged physical strength. Seeing such a Hajime, Kaori made a wry smile in agreement.

“… Un, I think her aggressiveness and positiveness amazing.”

“I treated her harshly at the beginning. I didn’t think of anyone as “special” other than Yue… I honestly thought she was going to give up quickly.”

“…”

“No matter how harsh I treated her, how I treated Yue as special, and she was always neither angry nor did she cry, but she seemed happy about it. She couldn’t compare to Yue in magic usage because she didn’t have aptitude in magic, and even if she was defeated in a mock battle against Yue, she didn’t stop to move forward. She didn’t cower even though she was attacked by her own inferiority complex.”

“I-I, thing like inferiority complex…”

Kaori who silently listening to Hajime, couldn’t help to object and

stood up. However, she was exhausted and immediately sat back.

“Didn’t you notice it? You’ve been apologizing since we came here. Even the way you smiled is completely different than the usual.”

“Eh?”

“Listen, Kaori. Don’t keep looking down. Raise your face and look into my eyes.”

That being said, Kaori finally noticed she had been looking down for a while now. Before, she made sure to look at the other person’s eyes when talking… thus, when Kaori met Hajime’s gaze she realized.

“Listen here, I will not say it for the second time. I love Yue. Even if I thought of others as “important,” it won’t change that only Yue is “special.” So if you feel pain from it, if you feel you are inferior compared to Yue… Kaori, you should part from me.”

“Kh…”

The blunt words made Kaori look down again. Hajime continued talking even though he did see her reaction.

“The reason I allowed Kaori to accompany us at that time is because of the same reason as Shia; I judged it’d be the best for

Kaori to be by my side, because I trust Kaori. You understood my feelings, “even so” you moved ahead for your wish. That’s why I thought it’d be okay for you by my side if you favor me… but, I don’t feel the same way now.”

When Hajime ended his words, he separated his hand from the downcast Kaori’s. Then, he spun the ending words.

“Please think carefully about it once more. Why did you come along with us, and if should you stay by my side from now on… Kaori is not Shia. Shia likes Yue, too. …Depending on your answer, I will send you back to your best friend (Yaegashi).”

“I-I…”

Kaori wanted to say something as she watched the hand separating from her own, the words wouldn’t come out.

Inside the awkward atmosphere, Hajime urged Kaori to move because it was necessary for them to approach the biggest sailing ships enshrined at the distance.

Chapter 94 - Once Again, I Remember

Hajime and Kaori looked up at the sailing ships. Even on Earth, early sailing ships couldn't match the gigantic scale of this one.

No less than 300 meters in length, and as large as a ten story building, it was only being partly visible from the ground. All along their hull magnificent decorations were mounted. Although rotted, they still gave off a strong impression that made you want to admire them. On their wooden ship, Hajime, who also specialized in manufacturing the same decorations, was grudgingly impressed with the extent they had detailed their ships, and couldn't help but admire the time and effort the artisans put into creating them.

While hugging Kaori, Hajime jumped up using "Void Grip" and landed on the Terrace at the top of the Luxury liner. Then, sure enough, the surrounding space began to distort.

"Again?… Kaori stay alert. Something is bound to happen."

"Un. It looks fine to me."

Hajime felt that Kaori's laidback response wasn't suitable for someone still in the middle of challenging a Great Dungeon. It had become clear for a while now that Kaori's tension had dropped sharply. Even though she was still putting on a smile, Hajime could tell that it was different from all her usual ones. He was sure she wasn't doing it on purpose, but her new distracted attitude wasn't good for their current situation. She should at least hold it in check until the exploration of 【Meljeene Deep Sea Ruins】was done, Hajime thought while sharply scratching his cheek.

Hajime took a quick survey of their altered environment, this time

it seems they were on top of a luxury liner sailing out at sea.

Presently it's night time, with the full moon shining in the heavens. The luxury liner is shining with light sparkles, and on the deck there are various arrangements buffet-type style cuisines lined up with many people who were chatting about while having delicious-looking food in one hand. Presently it was night time, with a full moon glowing in the heavens. The luxury liner shone with sparkling lights, and on the deck were various arrangements of buffet-style cuisine lined up with a crowd of people chatting together while holding delicious-looking food in one hand.

"This is a party…isn't it?"

"Haa, it sure is dazzling. Did we misunderstand Meljeene's concept?"

Hajime and Kaori were standing upon a raised terrace, probably an area reserved for the crew, while looking down on the enormous deck and trying to get their heads around the difference between this cheerful party and the ghastly sight they had witnessed last time.

Then, just as they decided to take a brief rest, the door behind them opened and several chatting sailors walked out. Rather than risk losing this chance while they took a rest, they decided to mix in with the sailors and listen to their conversation.

From listening to the sailor's stories they learned that this maritime party was apparently being held in celebration of the end of the war. The war that had continued for so many years, rather than ending through invasion and annihilation, had been resolved by signing a peace treaty. The sailors seemed happy, and if they looked closely they were able to see that not only were there

humans on the deck but also devils and demi-humans. Without distinction for race, everyone was freely chatting among themselves.

“There was an age such as this, wasn’t there?”

“It certainly was a great achievement for all those people to give so much effort to end the war. Although I’m not sure how many years have passed since the end of the war, surely not all of the ill feelings have faded, yet they are still able to laugh so freely…”

“Surely the people down there must be similar to those who tried their best to end the war. Everyone is different, seeing this doesn’t necessarily mean that everyone is able to laugh together so soon.”

“That’s true…”

Getting caught up in the atmosphere and bright expressions of the people, Hajime and Kaori also naturally loosened up. After a while they saw an elderly man climbing up onto a stage prepared on the deck. There was a sense of respect in the eyes of the people below as they noticed him on stage and abruptly stopped chatting to focus on him.

There was another man who appeared to be an aide standing near the elderly man, but for some reason he was wearing a hood and trying to blend in with the background. Given the occasion, Hajime thought that his appearance was a bit rude… however it didn’t look like anyone else was concerned about the hooded man.

Eventually, when all the chatter had subsided, the elderly man began his speech.

“Gentlemen, those who wished for peace, the brave souls who ran through the war risking their lives, are the messengers of peace. Today, at this place, I truly feel that it’s a great fortune for all of us to be able to meet here together. It was a war that begun a long time, even for my generation, yet we were able to stand together in peace after bringing an end to the war. To see such a dream come true… my heart still trembles.”

Everyone was listening in silence as the old man spoke. As the speech continued, events such as doubt, crossing paths and incidents became stepping stones towards peace. He spoke of those who were often reckless in their attempts to overturn this, and the friends who scattered during the middle… as the speech progressed everyone eyes begun to look far away, yearning for their missed ones and suppressing moisture from the corners of their eyes, enduring the urge to let their tears flow.

It would seem the old man is the king of the Humans. Among the humans, even at the early stages of the war, it seemed as there was a movement behind the scenes for peace. The people now nod to show their respect.

Finally it seemed as though the speech ended. The king still seems quite worked up after his speech, the atmosphere on the deck is also still quite worked up. However Hajime is attacked by a bad premonition. Something feels off, he has seen the expression the king is wearing somewhere before.

“–and thus, one year has passed since the signing of the peace treaty …….. It was all so foolish.”

At the words of the King, for a moment the crowd appeared

puzzled, Hajime thought he had misheard him. Everyone was looking at each other in confusion. In the meantime the King's heated speech continued.

"Yes, it truly was foolish. To see both the beasts and the heretics talking about the future and exchanging drinks, it was ridiculous. Do you understand, gentlemen? That's right, I am talking about you."

"What on earth are you saying Aleist?! Hell, what's wrong with sayin- gaah!?"

With the sudden change of King Aleist, one of the devils who was agitated stood up before him. Then, as he tried to question King Aleist…. the sudden result was a sword growing from his chest.

The demon tribe man who was stabbed, looked back over his shoulder to see the startled expressions of the human tribe. By looking at their faces you could tell they were all honestly surprised. With a final expression of disbelief, the man of the Demon tribe collapsed.

Screams arose and the entire deck fell into an uproar. "Your Majesty!", cried several men and women as they rushed to the collapsed body of the Demon tribe man.

"Well gentlemen, as I stated originally, I am truly happy to bring everyone together tonight. We will create a country free from the races that were abandoned by god, where all can be equal.

From the Genesis there was only one god, ‘Ehito-sama’. Those who turned their backs on him, foolishly worshiping a false god, such pagans mustn’t be allowed to leave! It will end today! The only path to peace is through destroying all the heathens! Therefore, this day, as we sweep away the leaders of the non-believers, I cannot help but rejoice! Now, servants of God, pass judgement on these heathens with the hammer of justice! Aah! Ehito-sama, please watch over our work!”

King Aleist’s laughter echoed loudly as he fell onto his knees and gazed up towards the heavens. At the same time he signaled soldiers, who had been dressed as sailors, to completely surrounded the party on the deck.

The deck is positioned in the middle of the ship, sandwiched between a gigantic mast and the main structure, 10 floors high running from front to back. If you look, the soldiers are occupying the scaffolding on the terrace and mast, arranged so that they can focus on the targets below them. Out at sea there is nowhere they can escape to, the geographical advantage is entirely on the soldier’s side. Hajime would’ve been aware of this already, but the countries leader’s expressions of despair showed they were only just realising it now.

In an instant, all the magic was finally released and bombarded the deck. Although the passengers fought back desperately, they were at a disadvantage… it was a one-sided massacre as those who resisted were slaughtered.

Those who ran fled towards the inside of the ship, however most of them were killed as they ran. The deck had been completely changed into a sea of blood in only an instant.

“Ugh”

“Kaori…”

Kaori covered her mouth with one of her hands to suppress the nausea as she leant on the railing. The sight was so horrific that it was no wonder Hajime reached out and offered Kaori his support.

It appears King Aleist felt like hunting as he soon joined his subordinates in pursuing the remnants who had fled into the ship.

The hooded man followed the king into the ship. Just before he stepped inside he turned and looked back at the deck. In that instant a tuft of silver hair escaped from the fringe of his hood and shone brightly in the reflected moonlight. His hidden eyes met theirs and for a moment Hajime’s thought they had been seen.

The surroundings distorted, apparently the dungeon only want to show them that previous scene, Hajime and Kaori were soon back to on top of the derelict luxury liner.

“Kaori, rest for a little bit.”

“No, I’m fine. Although it was somewhat intense… but I wonder if that was really the end of that trial… we didn’t even do anything.”

“I think this ship graveyard is its ending point. Although we could’ve explored the sea beyond the barrier… if you think about it normally, people who wanted to proceed out into the depths of the sea would need to use the ship. Perhaps witnessing that scene was itself the purpose of the vision. To burn the gruesomeness of the gods work into your memory so you would feel compelled to

explore this ship as a result. It's a pretty nasty idea, especially for the people from this world."

The people of this world, though few of them would make it here, are expected to have faith in the gods. To show them such a gruesome result of their faith… it would surely torture a gentle spirit, and this Labyrinth's vital point for exploration is the power of magic which heavily relies on one's mental state. In that sense, it was the reverse of Raisen Great Labyrinth. It was only because Hajime came from another world that the results of this mental pressure was of such a small degree.

Hajime and Kaori both looked over the deck with an expression indicating their reluctant remembrance of the ghastly massacre that had occurred here. However in Hajime's case, his face looked more like he was remembering a bad sports foul.

Having made their resolve, the two of them jump down onto the deck and set foot near the door that King Aleist once entered who knows how long ago.

The inside of the ship was completely enclosed in darkness. Since the outside was bright, it wouldn't have been strange for light to shine in through crevices in the rotted wood, but for some reason there was no light at all. In order to push forward into the darkness Hajime took a light out from his 'Treasure box'.

"That sight earlier… Even though the war was already over… I wonder, did king really betray them…?"

“That’s what it looked like… However, wasn’t it a little bit strange? When he stood up on stage those people looked at him with eyes full of love and respect… If deep down you truly hated Demons and Demi-humans, would you really be able to earn such deep respect?”

“That’s true… Based on the way those people were speaking to him, it seems like there must’ve been a sudden change sometime during the one year after the end of the war… What could have happened to cause such a change of heart?”

“Well, without a doubt they were fighting for their god, they were shouting it loudly enough. They gave off an almost deranged feeling.”

“Yeah, they looked like Ishtar-san, abusing their religion to look down on others. It’s pathetic isn’t it?”

Apparently, from the high school girls perspective, the Pope of the Sacred Church was a pathetic person. However, Hajime only had the smallest feeling of sympathy for him upon hearing it. The two of them continued forwards, still thinking about the earlier scene, until they spotted something ahead shining in response to Hajime’s light.

Hajime and Kaori stop their feet and watched as the light slowly approached them. When it got closer they could see that it was a girl in a fluttering white dress. She stopped in the hallway in front of them and stood there, swaying slightly with her head looking downwards.

Kaori and Hajime felt something unpleasant and shuddered violently. Kaori's expression became particularly stiff while Hajime, deciding that an ordinary girl wouldn't be in a place like this, pointed Donner at the girl with the intention of killing her.

Instantly, the girl collapsed into the hallway with a soft thump. Then, at an angle impossible for a normal human's joints, raised herself up onto her hands and feet like a spider and launched herself straight at them!

Ketaketaketaketaketaketaketaa! (TN: Spider girl's laugh?)

Her bizarre laughter echoed throughout the hallway. Shining eyes, just like those from urban legends, glared at them from between her bangs, as Hajime shot at the approaching figure.

(TN: Actually genderless, but whatever. Editor wanted to add "her". Meh)

(EN: We've already described it as a girl, seemed appropriate).

(TN: Meh. Whatever. I am tired.)

"NOOOOOOOOO!!!!"

"Wah!? Calm down Kaori! Don't grab my arm!"

Just like the template for this situation called for, Kaori clung onto Hajime and let out a scream. The girl approaching them laughed at her mockingly. Hajime, who was trying to shoot the girl with Donner, had his aim shifted due to Kaori clinging onto him.

“Kegya!!”

In a moment the girl was at Hajime’s feet. Then, with her bizarre cry, she lept straight at Hajime’s face.

Hajime reluctantly gave up on trying to shoot her, and instead delivered a sure-kill yakuza-style kick straight into her still laughing stomach . As a precaution, he had clad himself and magic and used ‘Grand Legs’ to deliver the blow. (TN: “Grand Legs”. New spell or what? Don’t remember it at all…. It’s in the character introduction chapter, but what the hell?”

The moment Hajime’s kick hit her stomach the girl was blown away into the wall, before bouncing several times and coming to a stop at the end of the hallway. Her limbs were now in an even more unnatural position she slowly vanished, as though melting into the darkness.

Hajime let out a sigh and then gave the still shaking Kaori clinging onto him a bonk on the head with his fist. With a start Kaori looked up at Hajime, an expression of fear still on her face. Tears clung to her eyes as her mouth let out a small squeak, anyone could see she was still terrified.

“Hey Kaori, are you bad with these ghoulish type of things?”

“Is there such a person who is good with them?!”

“Wouldn’t you be fine if you just thought of them as apparitions?”

“…. Gusuu, I’ll try my best.”

As Kaori promised, she separated herself from Hajime, however she didn't let her hand go of Hajime's clothes.

Until earlier she had been worried about what to say to Hajime, she had seemed more reserved than usual, but now a strong will dwelt in her eyes. She would absolutely not allow herself to be separated from him! It was a type of desperation, while simultaneously being an expression of her love for him.

Just as Kaori had finished gathering her resolve the door ahead of them in the hallway flew open with a bang. On the other side of the door there were countless bloodstains on the floor, and when they looked up they saw the head of a woman with long, dripping wet, hair hung up on the ceiling looking down at them. At the same time they heard a noise and turned around to see a headless man dragging an axe along the floor behind him.

Hajime delivered another one of his yakuza-like kick to the headless man and readied his gun to follow up, but there was no need. The headless man was already dead from the kick.

"No more… I want to go back now… I want to see Shizuku-chan~"

As the proceeded further into the ship the strange phenomena became more and more violent, which caused Kaori to regress back into a child, clinging onto Hajime's back and refusing to come out.

Ever since Kaori was small she had looked up to Shizuku as her knight & protector whenever she entered haunted houses or had to deal with Kouki and the boys. However, those feelings never crossed the boundary into being yuri.

Meljeene, the founder of 【Meljeene Deep Sea Ruins】, seemed to be trying to back them into an emotional corner. Hajime, having survived The Abyss, already had experience dealing with being surrounded by darkness and didn't really find it very difficult to cope with, though he could understand how it would be difficult for someone with a more normal psyche to handle. However, he couldn't imagine Tio or Yue sobbing from such surprises.

That was until a while ago when Kaori, while still half crying – half flirting, had stepped out and begun to repel the horrors using her healing magic. Seeing her sudden change in attitude had made Hajime want to tsukkomi "where did the scared and lost little girl like atmosphere from earlier go?" as he watched her. As they advanced Kaori began to get more unsteady again, but together they eventually arrived at the ship's hold.

They stepped through the opened heavy doors. They proceeded towards the back of the ship's hold, moving in between the sparsely spread out cargo. However, before they had progressed far the doors behind them shut themselves with a loud 'boom!'

"Pii!?"

Kaori let out a strange voice at this surprising sound and Hajime began to worry whether or not she was keeping in mind their important talk about what she should do after finishing the labyrinth. It wasn't the first time this thought had crossed his mind.

However Hajime just let out a sigh and began to calmly stroking Kaori's shoulders. However the effectiveness of this tactic was disrupted when a thick fog began to slowly block their field of view.

“Ha-Ha-Ha-Ha-Ha-Hajime-kun!?”

“You’re beginning to laugh just like a cheerful foreigner. Don’t worry, just handle it like always. You’ll be fine if you just crush them with your magic.”

The moment Hajime replied they heard the ring of something as it tore through the wind, flying towards them. Hajime moved like a bolt of lightning and blocked the attack aimed at his neck with his left arm. When he lowered his left arm they could see an extremely thin thread stuck into it. They didn’t have time to stare, soon there was the continuous ring of the wind being cut as arrows flew at them from all sides.

“To come so far just for a trap? It’s so disgusting! That’s just typical of those damn liberators!”

“Come forth, Guardian of Light. Absolute Light!”

Hajime was caught by surprise for a moment, however, since they were only a primitive weapons Kaori was able to block them with her defensive magic. Soon though, the fog ahead of them began to swirl violently and a fierce storm struck Hajime and Kaori.

“Kya!?”

Kaori was blown away in the storm, her screaming figure disappearing into the fog. Hajime, made a sour face as he tried to find her using his perception ability. Unfortunately, it seems the fog had a function that inhabited skills of the sensing system,

similar to inside the【Haltina Sea of Trees】, thus he quickly lost track of her.

“Che. Kaori, don’t move!”

With a sour face Hajime called out to Kaori, but instead of Kaori a knight wielding a longsword came tearing out of the fog ahead of him. Using an unusual technique, he lunged fiercely and swung the sword at Hajime.

Parrying the attack calmly with Donner, he struck the his large opponent in the chest with Schlag then fired a magic bullet into his stomach with Donner. A hole opened in the knight’s stomach and he silently vanished into the mist.

However, immediately after a line of swordsmen and knights with abnormal strength emerged from the fog. These warriors held a variety of different weapons, and used the fog to launch attacks at Hajime one after another, fading back into the mist after each strike.

“Damn, so troublesome…”

While spitting out curses, Hajime expanded red magic bullets around his body like a satellite, also activating “Lightspeed”(瞬光) swiftly tidied up his surroundings. It was a concern to him that he could not hear Kaori’s voice.

Hajime was concerned that he couldn’t hear Kaori’s reply. While spitting out curses Hajime launched bullets of red magic and made them orbit his body like satellites. At the same time he activated ‘Lightspeed’ and swiftly tidied up his surroundings.

Shifting to Kaori, with Hajime gone from her sight she was finding

it hard to keep up a brave front. Kaori was really bad with horror, it would be very difficult to overcome her current predicament even under normal circumstances, but now her body wanted to freeze up just from the fear of being alone. Add in her strong inferiority complex, though she wouldn't admit it to herself, and the bottom line was that all she wanted to do was curl herself up and cry.

Kaori scolded herself, she mustn't let herself be found cowering like this, and forced her body to stand back up. As soon as she was upright again she felt a hand on her shoulder. Hajime would often encourage her by patting her on the shoulder. Overcome by happiness, Kaori found herself turning around in delight.

"Hajime-ku-"

However, as she turned around Kaori noticed that something felt off about the hand on her shoulder. To be more accurate, it felt too thin and too cold. Kaori felt chills run down her spine as her intuition warned her that what was behind her was not Hajime.

If it wasn't Hajime, then who on earth was it? Continuing to turn, now like a rusty machine, Kaori saw it. Eyes, nose, mouth… and then even more holes. It was the face of a woman dyed in a darkness as black as the abyss.

"Fuwah~"

Kaori's spirit was over in an instant, and her defensive instincts rendered her unconscious.

In the 2 minutes it took Kaori to get up and faint, Hajime had already destroyed 50 ghostly warriors. This was only his rough estimate based on killing one of the ghostly veterans every 2-3

seconds.

Just as he was beginning to think he had wiped them all out, a large man wielding a greatsword tore out from the fog, charged straight at him and swung a blow that boasted of enormous hidden strength.

Hajime dodged the attack with the smallest movement of his body. However it wasn't over yet. The warrior bounced the greatsword back into the air using the recoil from the blow to the ground and moved to attack again.

Hajime responded by activating 'Vajra', stopping the blow with his mechanical arm and jumping up onto the greatsword with his knees, forcing it from his opponents hands and trapping it against the ground. Then, with a swift motion he raised his gun and fired a magic bullet straight into the large man's head.

At the same time the large man's head was blown off the surrounding fog begins to fade away.

"Kaori! Where are you?"

Hajime focused all of his senses on finding Kaori's presence. However, even without doing that Kaori was easily found.

"I'm over here, Hajime-kun."

"Kaori, are you alright?"

Hajime divulged a sigh of relief upon seeing Kaori walking towards him with a smile. Once Kaori reached his side she snuggled up against against him with a beautiful smile.

“It was… very scary…”

“Is that so?…”

“Un. That’s why I want to be comforted”

As she said this Kaori threw her arms around Hajime’s neck and hugged him. At a distance so close they were practically nose-to-nose, Kaori locates Hajime’s mouth with her eyes and began to draw herself closer…

Gotsu (TN: Sound effect. *thunk*)

With a Gotsu~tsu sound (TN: *thunk*) Donner’s muzzle met Kaori’s temple.

“Wh-what…?”

Kaori appeared to be confused as Hajime narrowed his brutal-looking eyes and directed murderous intent towards her.

“What? Of course I’ll kill enemies, no matter how they look like” and without a beat of hesitation he pulled the trigger.

Karankara (*Clang-clang*)

There was the sound of a knife hitting the ground, it had fallen out of the hand of Kaori when she was shot. She had intended to stab him in the back as she was hugging him. With steady footsteps Hajime approached the collapsed Kaori.

Getting back up, Kaori begins talking to Hajime in a frightened and trembling voice.

“Hajime-kun, why would you do such a thing!?”

However Hajime response was to fire another magic bullet at Kaori.

“Don’t you dare speak with Kaori’s voice! Do not degrade her body by moving it! Did you think I couldn’t see the truth? You are nothing but a piece of trash possessing her body.”

Hajime’s ‘Magic Stone Eye’ had already revealed to him that there was a ghostly woman possessing Kaori.

With the truth clearly exposed Kaori, who until just a moment ago had been cowering on the ground, instantly changed her expression and burst into mocking laughter.

“Nyahahaha, even if you know the truth it is of no matter. You can’t do anything…this girl’s body is already mine!

As she said this the possessed Kaori raised herself off the ground and pushed Hajime down onto the ground into the mounted position.

“Wait, what are you doing? This is your woman! Do you plan to hurt her!?”

“Shut up! You’re giving me a headache. Didn’t I tell you not to move? I’m not going to hurt Kaori, the magic bullets will pass right

through her body, the only one who will suffer is you."

"If I disappear this woman's soul will shatter! Is that really alright with you!?"

At those words Hajime inclined his head slightly in thought. Although there was a good chance it wasn't a bluff, there was no way to verify if it was true.

Most people would probably become trapped by indecision in this situation, was the possessed Kaori hoping for this? She was giving her cat-like laugh again while motioning for him to step aside. Seeing this Hajime gave her his reply.

Zupan~! Zupan!

It was a pair of magic bullets. The possessed Kaori's expression was too shocked to reveal as to whether she had felt any pain. Soon her expression shifted into one of frustration as she shouted at Hajime in an angry voice.

"Are you insane!? Do you not care what happens to this woman!?"

"Shut up you pile of trash! If I don't attack then Kaori's body would remain possessed. However, as long as you aren't killed her soul won't break, right? Until you feel like leaving her body everything will be fine if I just torment you without killing you."

The ghostly woman was left speechless at his words. When she looked into Hajime's eyes she was being stabbed by his murderous intent that dwelt there.

“I’ll make you regret thinking you could touch what’s ‘important’ to me. Even though you’re an enemy I won’t kill you, I won’t let you experience the relief of death. I’ll make it so you can’t escape Kaori’s body even if you want to. I’ll force you to suffer until you go mad from the pain.”

Red magic flowed out from Hajime’s body, his white hair was caught in the eddies and slowly began to sway in the energy. There was no rage, bloodthirst or insanity in his eyes, they were like frozen chips of ice.

Hajime was furious, more so than ever before. He wouldn’t be satisfied with just kill his enemy this time, they must experience cruelty akin to the depths of hell.

The ghost possessing Kaori had been too dense to realise she had picked a fight with something that should never be disturbed. Only now, as she felt her gaze trapped in Hajime eyes, did she finally realise what she had awakened; a monster, one you would normally pray to never meet.

With Donner’s muzzle again pressed against her forehead, the ghostly woman earnestly begged for release. Even if all it bought her was permission to disappear a single second faster, when she imagined what this monster would probably do to her even one second seemed like a blessing.

She was just an ordinary ghost. Although it did seem that her lingering essence was greater than than any of the other apparitions they had encountered, in the face of this atmosphere it all amounted to nothing. The frozen wrath Hajime was giving off was just that terrifying.

“Iwanttodisappear!Iwanttodisappear!Iwanttodisappear!
Iwanttodisappear!Iwanttodisappear!Iwanttodisappear!”

The ghost's sobs echoed louder as Hajime's finger moved to pull the trigger, when suddenly the Kaori's body began to shine. It was the sparkle of the restore-all-abnormal-status recovery magic 'Ten Thousand Heavens', which Kaori had prepared as a precaution ahead of time using the ability of 'Delayed Invocation'.

While left dumbfounded by the feeling of unbelievable relief the ghost heard a voice from inside her.

"–It's okay, I'll send you off properly."

Alongside these words the shining, pure white, light intensified. The ghost felt afraid as the light wrapped around her, dragging her gently along with it towards the heavens. However, as she gradually passed on to the next world and her consciousness began to fade she was overcome with a feeling of peace and relief.

With one clap, Kaori sent her off and slowly began to open her trembling eyelids. Hajime, still lying underneath Kaori in the mounted position, looked directly up into Kaori's eyes. Ever since Kaori began to shine, the fading presence of the ghost's existence had been reflected in Hajime's Magic Stone Eye. For the moment he released his killing intent and focused on confirming whether the ghost had truly left Kaori.

Their faces were so close, and with Hajime's lying underneath her, his gaze filled with a mixture of relief and worry as he focused his eyes intently on her pupils, it would've been enough to make anyone feel moved.

Gently lowering her head Kaori pressed her lips on Hajime's. It was only the barest meeting of their lips, but for Kaori it was still her precious first kiss.

Hajime whole body went stiffened in surprise for a moment. In order to be certain that Kaori had been released Hajime had used

almost all his concentration to examine her. With his mind so distracted, naturally it wasn't possible for him to avoid a kiss.

After a while Kaori gently released his lips.

"What are you…?"

"Perhaps it's my answer?"

"Your answer?"

"Un. Why did I follow you? Why do I want to keep on following you?…. This is my answer to Hajime's questions."

When she said this Kaori smiled at Hajime. It was smile he had always seen her wearing, warm like a ray of light from the sun. Ever since coming here it had become clouded and covered up by a false laugh, but now it shone once again.

In fact Kaori had still retained her consciousness while possessed, though it felt like watching the world outside while trapped inside a glass room. She had still been able to see Hajime in never seen before state of fury, saying things like Kaori was 'important' to him. It had flowed right through the ghost and reached her heart.

At the sight of this Hajime unbearable sadness had risen up in her chest, but at the same time she felt the nervous passion she had when she first confessed to him.

If she wanted to explain it, it was a feeling of selfish, of always wanting to be indulged, always make them vividly aware of your presence. Mixed in amongst the circle of girls Yue allowed to surround Hajime, Kaori found it intolerable that she wasn't allowed to hoard him all to herself, yet at the same time she didn't even want to imagine a future where she wasn't by Hajime's side.

She wanted to make them recognise that even if her capabilities were nowhere near Yue and the others, her feelings weren't any

less.

“I like you Hajime-kun, no, I love you. That’s why from here on I want our futures to be entwined.”

“Won’t it only leave you feeling bitter? Just like it is with Shia, even if Yue weren’t there, it doesn’t necessarily mean that I will love you back.”

“That’s true, it’ll probably be painful at times…. I want to be monopolised, I want you to only look at me. I feel so jealous of Yue sometimes, and so inferior when I compare myself to her”

“If that’s the case…”

“But I’ll only regret it if I allow myself to be separated from you here, I’m sure of it. For me, just being near Hajime is wonderful….and that’s how I’ve always felt. In time I want to close the gap between us even more, but for right now this is enough.”

Pinching Hajime’s cheeks between both her hands, Kaori smiled softly.

The expression on Hajime’s face was a complex mix of troubled and amazed, but Kaori had decided on her own, and if she believes that it’s the best decision for herself, Hajime wouldn’t say another word. Each person had their own idea of happiness, deciding Kaori’s happiness for her is something he couldn’t do, nor did he want to.

“…. I see. If Kaori is fine with this then I won’t say any more.”

“Un. Although I’ll probably cause a lot of trouble, please don’t hate me, alright?”

“What are you saying at such a late hour? From our time at school,

up to our time here, you have always been an terrible troublemaker."

"That's not true!"

"Really? Back at school you never read the situation and would casually come over and talk to me, completely unaware of the word bombs you were dropping everywhere, and never noticing that every time the guys around us would seethe with anger. And then let's not forget when a negligee-clad lady decided to visit a man's room in the middle of the night…"

"Uu, I remember, all I wanted to do was talk to you…. Un, it was really embarrassing when I realized later that I had come to your room dressed like that."

While Kaori was covering her blushing face with her hands, Hajime got up and offered Kaori a hand up. Then, with a grin, patted Kaori on the shoulder gently, and turned to start walking towards the magic circle that had begun to shine further inside the storeroom once the fog had lifted.

However, he was stopped by Kaori tightly grabbing onto his sleeve. If he looked carefully he could see that she was still a little unsteady. Apparently the possession had dulled her body's senses a little. Now that the body had been released it hopefully wouldn't take long for it to return back to it's normal state.

"Let's rest for a little bit."

Hajime had suggested this, but it seems Kaori had an idea of her own and with a smile she hopped up onto Hajime's back.

"….What are you doing?"

“Isn’t it better if we progress quickly? I don’t know when my magic power will return and if we hang around here the fog will surely come back, right?”

There was definitely some truth to her words,so Hajime replied with a “It can’t be helped” while scratching his head, and walked towards the magic circle while carrying Kaori.

Kaori wrapped her arms around Hajime’s neck and clung on tightly to his back. Although he didn’t say anything, Hajime was trying his best to ignore the soft feeling that pressing up against his back.

Kaori moved close enough that he could feel her hot breath in his ear. Her lips, close enough that they were almost touching his earlobe, opened gently and a sweet sound reverberated inside his ears.

“Hajime-kun… I want to asking you something about what happened earlier.”

“Earlier?”

“Yes. Why was it that you got so angry during that fight?”

“Saa, why was I angry? I don’t know.” (TN: “Don’t make a move on what’s ‘important’ to me.” …..Was he really an otaku before?)

“Mouu, please tell me～.”

Refusing to answer her questions or get caught up in her flirtatious atmosphere, Hajime continued to carry Kaori while moving forward at a brisk pace and without hesitation stepped into the magic circle.

Refer to chapter 89!

Chapter 95 - Gross-Food Subjugation

Faint light shone on the surface of the sea, and it made the swaying waves a ceiling.

In that space, a building that was like a temple existed in the center, which was supported by four huge columns. There was no wall between the columns. A delicate, complex magic formation was drawn at the place that seemed to be an altar at the center of the temple. Still, from the temple whose surroundings were filled with ocean water, the pathway that floated on the surface of the sea extended in four directions, and the end went on to become a circle. And, a magic formation was also drawn on the footing of that circle.

One among the four magic formations began to shine suddenly. Then, after the momentary light that was like an explosion, the shadows of people stood there. It was Hajime and Kaori.

"……Here is…… Is that a magic formation? Unexpectedly, was it captured?"

"Um, is there some problem?"

"No, I didn't think that it was really already cleared…… Though I felt it was a little easy when compared to the other Labyrinths…… Though I expected that clione to at least come out at the end……"

Apparently, understanding that they seemed to have arrived at the dwelling of Meiru Merujine, Hajime made an expression like he was a little let down. In contrast to that, Kaori, peeking at his face from over Hajime's shoulder, replied while smiling wryly.

"You know, Hajime-kun. This place was plenty difficult. The beginning is an undersea cave after all, and because normally you would not possess something like a submarine, you would continuously be consuming a lot of magical power the whole time until it was cleared, and if done poorly, as it is you would drown. The clione-like thing was an almost impossibly tough enemy, and because physical attacks were ineffective against the things that looked like ghosts, you will again rely on magical power. Because of that, breaking through cannot be done without fighting a large army. It's a sufficiently ridiculous degree of difficulty."

"Yeah, though I guess it might be so if you say so."

"Not to mention, as for the people of this world the piety seems to be strong…… To display such madness……"

"Too much mental intensity……?"

Kaori's point was, in short, that Hajime was too strong. When saying up to there, certainly, Hajime agreed that Guryuen Conflagration Mountain would have also been able to be captured flawlessly if not for the attack of Fried at the end.

And, come to think of it, they had arrived before joining up with Yue and the others, but at the time that he thought about what

they were doing, the magic formation that was at the end of the path to the right began to shine like it had read Hajime's thoughts.

When the bursting light had settled down, the figures of the three people of Yue, Shia, and Tio were there. It was exquisite timing.

"Good timing. Was it OK over there?"

"N…… Over there…… was it not safe?"

"Ah, Kaori-san are you alright!?"

"Mu? Are you hurt? What happened to recovery magic?"

To Hajime's calling out, even though each of them showed an energetic appearance, they sent gazes like they were worried at Kaori who was being carried on Hajime's back. Kaori's reply regarding that was……

"Thank you for worrying. But, I'm fine. Because half was just me being spoiled."

To Kaori who declared that boldly as she floated a truly cheerful smile, as Yue narrowed her eyes, Shia appealed with "I'm jealous. Please switch places with me～," and Tio raised a broad smile with a "Hohoo," seemingly amused.

“Hey, Kaori. Perhaps, can you already stand up?”

“Ehehe, actually from the beginning there was no problem with walking…… I’m sorry?”

“Haa, hurry up and get down.”

To Kaori who laughed like a little evil slipped out, Hajime let Kaori down while showing an amazed expression. And then, they joined with Yue and the others and faced the temple.

“And? What happened? Hey, try to say it, Goshujin-sama. It seems something happened with Kaori? Hey, hey, what happened? Say it without hiding – hebuu!?”

Because she began to question him with an absolutely annoying feeling while Tio smirked, Hajime who became irritated dispatched an open handed slap at once. As she sat at ease, Tio, who had crumbled down with a fascinating slanting posture, colored her cheeks while breathing roughly.

“I-impact after a long time~, haa haa, n, Goshujin-sama, isn’t it fine punishing me more? Isn’t doing a kick instead good?”

In the atmosphere that was expected somewhere, ignoring Tio who said such things as she pleased, Hajime and the others went

towards the altar inside. From the back, “One more time, it is fine with one time! Please, hit me～,”though the disgusting words were heard, everyone ignored it with all of their power.

“……And? What happened?”

Yue asked the same question as Tio. However, the look was not at Hajime, it was faced at Kaori. Kaori, smiling sweetly in good humor as she matched gazes with Yue, dropped a bomb of words like the other day.

“I only kissed with Hajime-kun a little.”

“……Hou.”

“Eh!? Is that true!? From which one!? From which one was it!? It can’t be, from Hajime-san!?”

To Kaori’s words, Yue’s voice lowered one level, and Shia drew closer like she was excited.

“It was from me. ……Hajime-kun was angry for my sake…… I stole it not being able to endure it.”

“Waa, it’s the same as my time! I also stole one because I could not endure it. We’re comrades! Kaori-san!”

“Ufufu, that’s right, Shia. Next time, shall we steal one with two people?”

“In that case, should we rather make it to a fait accompli?”

Right at Hajime’s side, the two girls began to refine the Hajime attack plan. A cold sweat flowed on Hajime’s face. Though it looked like they were in high spirits going “Kya Kya” as they appeared to be joking, in fact, it was because the eyes of Kaori and Shia were serious. In the old days he never would have imagined Kaori turning carnivorous eyes towards him.

“……I thought you would run away with your tail rolled up.”

Yue turned a probing look at Kaori. Yue had noticed that Kaori was tormenting her heart as she felt an inferiority complex. Therefore, this time that became the first Great Labyrinth challenge for Kaori, possibly she thought about if she would run home failing. Of course, she had no intention to comfort the other party who had proclaimed a declaration of war to her. If she drew back here, it as just fine if she declared victory when she considered the extent of it.

However, it seemed that Kaori had gotten back on her feet, or rather, there was even an atmosphere of determination being made since before. She was anxious about what had happened.

“……That’s right. From Hajime-kun as well, I was told that doing

so sooner was better. But, the various differences among other things with Yue…… I will show them now.”

“……Did you become defiant?”

“Indeed it might be called that. Or perhaps I should say, although I came along with you all becoming defiant from the start, showing the difference, it was surely only forgotten. I showed you a shameful place.”

“……Although it would be fine if you gave up as you were.”

“Fufu, are you scared? To compete together?”

“……Don’t get carried way by the rhythm. Troublemaker.”

“That, it was said also by Hajime-kun. ……I, do I have a constitution to make trouble like that I wonder……?”

To Yue’s sharp words, Kaori’s face stiffened. Though she felt a little down being called a troublemaker similarly by both her rival in love and the one she loved, she immediately pulled herself together. Incidentally, actually Yue as well, or perhaps you should say Hajime and the others, because everyone comparatively has a constitution to make trouble, though the words surely boomeranged considerably, the self-consciousness of it was not in Yue.

“Well, although it might be as Yue says……because I am at least Hajime-kun’s ‘Importance’, I decided to aim at ‘Special’ doing my best. Whatever anyone might say, right?”

“……I see. In that case I will accept your challenge the same as before.”

“Yes! Ah, even so, I don’t hate Yue, you know? A fighting friend or something like that, that sort of thing was yearned for just a little.”

“……Friends? Kaori and I are?”

“That’s right, friends. In Japan, there is something like a person who represents friend writing rival. In that case, isn’t it fine to read friend by writing love rival too?”

“……Japan…… Hajime’s birthplace…… It is a more mysterious country the more I hear about it. But…… I think it is a good sense.”

“Right. Ufufu, that’s why, please take care of me after this too?”

“……N.”

Though Yue and Kaori were emitting an atmosphere of good

feelings somewhat, at the side, Hajime who heard the two people's conversation was terribly uncomfortable. It was a feeling like a young man alone even inappropriately slipping into the midst of girls that were making girls talk. And, such things as Kaori knowing the words of a certain end of the century person called strong, although it cannot be helped wanting to tsukkomi because Yue's return was the words of a certain cardboard box loving snake, he controlled himself because he read the mood.

Hajime and the others who arrived at the altar set foot on the magic formation with everybody. Going by the usual, it carefully examined the inside of their minds, and their memories were read. However, it was not just that this time, it was like looking at what the other people experienced at the same time. In other words, what Yue and the others experienced was shared with Hajime and Kaori too.

Somehow or other, it seemed that Yue and the others finally arrived at an abandoned metropolis that should even be called an undersea city in a huge underground space. Thereupon, the space warped the same as with Hajime and Kaori, and it was like war came in the metropolitan area with the armies of two countries. Because, that metropolis seemed that it was a place being invaded by the army of the Majin tribe in the human capital, and in the end, it seemed they were attacked from both the same as Hajime and Kaori.

There was a huge architecture that appeared to be the royal castle in the interior of the capital, and Yue and the others who pushed on while kicking about the armies heard the speech of the leaders in the invaded royal castle.

By all means, because the incident where the Majin tribe destroyed

a human village was the impetus, although the humans' country that made this metropolis the capital city began a war with the Majin tribe side, actually, that was like a conspiracy of the human side that did not hope for peace and desired the Majin tribe's extermination. By the time it was noticed, the war that was already getting out of hand expanded, and finally it had become a situation where the united human side had the tables turned on them and was invaded until the royal capital….. It seemed that was the situation.

And, the person plotted that conspiracy, it seemed it was the high priest of the Light Faith Church that was deeply connected with the country, and this Light Faith Church apparently was the predecessor of the Sacred Faith Church. Furthermore, they appeared to be violently cornered. As though they were entreating a deity in troubled times, they tried to obtain the support of God offering sacrifices. As a result, several hundred human women and children were gathered from the metropolitan area, and it became a ghastly situation of a mass killing being done in the church's cathedral.

Even Yue and the others, when they saw that scene it seemed to be quite intense as expected. Because the confirmation of memories by the magic formation compelled them to remember, it made their faces pale. Especially, Shia seemed like she would vomit at any time.

Finally the confirmation of memories ended, and everyone seemed to have been recognized as someone who had captured it safely. The new Age of Gods magic was etched within Hajime's and the others' minds.

"Was this magic here? ……Wasn't it end to end of the continent?

Damn Liberators.”

“……Found it, ‘power of regeneration’.”

Hajime breathed out abusive language. That was because the Age of Gods magic of Merujine Undersea Ruins that they obtained was Reproduction magic.

He remembered the wording of the lithography that was under the Great Tree of Hartsina Sea of Trees. He was certain that it was written that the “power of regeneration” was necessary before advancing. In other words, to capture the Great Labyrinth that was at the end of the east, it would not be obtained if you did not go until the end of the west, and it was absurdly troublesome for a person who had arrived at Hartsina Sea of Trees first. Though it was still better since Hajime and the others possessed the means of high speed movement with the magic driven vehicles.

When Hajime puckered his eyebrows at the repulsiveness of the Liberators, and simultaneously with the magic formation’s light paling, a parallelepiped came out from the floor and approached. It seemed like a small altar. When thinking that the altar shone faintly, in the next moment the light took the shape of a human form. Somehow or other, it seemed to be a message left behind similarly with Oscar Orcus.

The human form clearly changed into an outline gradually, and it became a single woman. The girl who sat on the altar was wearing something like a white one piece dress that became loose, and she possessed fan shaped ears and long, emerald green hair. It seemed that the Liberators’ one person Meiru Merujine was a woman who was related to the Sea Tribe.

She, the same as Oscar, told the truth of the Liberators after she introduced herself. She seemed to be a gentle woman, wearing a kind atmosphere even while carrying grief. Before long when she finished the same talk as what Oscar had reported, she spoke words at the end.

"……Please, do not cling to God. Do not rely on it. Do not get used to things that are given. Struggle for the sake of grabbing hold of and taking it. Decide by your own will, and advance ahead by your own feet. Any difficult problem, the answer is always within you. It is only within you. Do not be misled by the sweet answer that God deludes you with. Under free will for sure, there is happiness. To you, I am praying that a rain of happiness pours down on you."

Finishing it so, Meiru Merujine vanished, becoming faint light again. Immediately afterward, a small magic formation shone as it appeared in the place where she had sat, and when the light settled down, a coin where the crest of Merujine was etched was placed there.

"The number of proofs is four, Hajime-san. With this, we are surely able to challenge the Sea of Trees Labyrinth too. I wonder how Father and the others are doing～?"

Shia was quick to think about her family and hometown that she really missed. However, because what came to mind was her father and the others going "Hyahha-!", she dispersed that scene by shaking her head. As Hajime put away the coin of proof in the Treasure Warehouse, he recalled the Haulia going "Hyahaa-!" the same as Shia, and drove out the scene by shaking his head.

And, just as the proof was put away, the temple began rumbling. And then, the ocean water of the surroundings suddenly began to raise the water level.

“Uo!? Tch, forced expulsion, huh? Everyone, hold on!”

“……N.”

“Wahwah, it’s too unreasonable!”

“It’s like Raisen Great Labyrinth, no mooore～.”

“Water torture…… is being done.”

To the sea water that terrifically increased in force, Hajime and the others who did not even have time to take out and board the submarine were submerged in the blink of an eye. Right away, they were again individually no match for the draining, and everyone firmly grabbed on each others’ clothes and equipped a compressed oxygen cylinder in their mouths that was taken out from the Treasure Warehouse.

And then, immediately after that, the ceiling part opened like the shortcut of Guryuen Conflagration Mountain, and ocean water poured in with violent force. Hajime and the others also, flowing into the shaft, were blown away to the upper regions by the violent force like being pushed out in a water fountain from below.

Perhaps, though it might be the shortcut of Merujine Undersea Ruins, different from the Meiru Merujine with an atmosphere such as a kind onee-san being gentle, it was an absurdly violent shortcut. Furthermore, it was like compulsion. Unexpectedly, she might have been an extreme person.

Hajime and the others who were forced up finally noticed that overhead was a dead end. However, the moment they collided with it, the ceiling part slid again, and they were thrown out into the vast sea vigorously outside of the ruins. Hajime was convinced. Meiru Merujine was absolutely an extremely sketchy character contrary to her appearance.

Hajime and the others who were thrown out in the sea hurriedly took out the submarine from the Treasure Warehouse. And then, though they tried to board it from the hatch, that plan was obstructed. Mostly, because of an opponent they did not want to meet.

Zubaaaaaaaa!!!

A semi-transparent tentacle passed before their eyes with terrific force, and the submarine was sent flying.

[Yue.]

[Frozen Coffin!]

In the gaze that Hajime turned ahead, although it was a seemingly fairy-like modeling, making everything melt, it was the worst, brutal creature that regenerates infinitely – the huge clione. While grinding his teeth at the thing that appeared especially after the capture was finished, Hajime called out to Yue by invoking Telepathy.

The huge clione again shot a countless number of tentacles with a violent force like they were not resisted by the water. On the other hand, Yue froze the surrounding ocean water in a spherical shape by harmonizing in response to Hajime's call, and formed a barrier of ice.

The barrier of ice was mightily blown away in the sea by the force of the tentacles that hit directly with Hajime and the others inside. Everyone was made to shake within the barrier at the violent impact.

[What should we do!? Goshujin-sama!]

To Tio who communicated by using the telepathy gem, Hajime answered.

[Everybody aim at the sea. We'll be tortured to death underwater. I'll buy us time!]

Hajime remotely manipulated the submarine by operating the ring type induction stone while saying so. From behind them, the

submarine that should have been blown away and sunk plunged forward with extreme speed, and evaded the countless tentacles that came to attack while wrenching the hull. And then it shot a countless number of torpedoes from the bottom of the ship.

The number of torpedoes that could be shot all at once was twelve. If one thinks about it normally it would be plenty of destructive power. However, Hajime, judging that the situation would gradually get worse if he did not make a certain chance here, did not loosen his hand and shot all of the torpedoes consecutively that were loaded on the submarine. Making it navigate like making the hull slip sideways, he made a circle with the huge clione in the center. While implementing impossible movement if it was an ordinary ship, the number of torpedoes that were fired successively were 48 in general.

Those that rushed while drawing a line of bubbles brought violent destruction, directly hitting the huge clione without varying their aim.

Doou! Doou! Doou! Doou!

Such muted impact sounds reverberated, and the ocean water rose and swelled like it had expanded. From the sea, if one were to look above the huge clione, the sea level would instantaneously rise, and next they would have observed an enormous column of water spout.

Hajime and the others tried to surface by manipulating the water current immediately after all of the torpedoes exploded. However much it looked like a monster that even possessed regenerative power, it should have bought some time for a little while.

However, the huge clione's nonsensicalness seemed to have easily exceeded their predictions.

[Yue, above!]

[Tsk… no good, I won't make it!]

A semi-transparent jelly was drifting above Hajime and the others who were trying to surface while recovering the remote controlled submarine, and it became a clione of three meter size when it gathered and solidified in several blinks. And then, when it opened its large head with a "Gapa!", it swallowed the barrier of ice as it was. Naturally, Hajime and the others were in the clione's belly together with the barrier.

[Shit, the regeneration is too fast!]

[It looked like it regenerated from a tentacle that was torn off!]

[This is bad, Hajime-san. The surroundings are full of jelly!]

Apparently, it was not just the tentacle that was torn off, the semi-transparent jelly seemed to have been distributed here and there by getting on the ocean current from the beginning.

[……Hajime. There is not much to maintain it! I can't reinforce it because there is no ocean water in the belly!]

[Tch, everyone prepare for impact!]

Yue frantically resisted the barrier of ice melting with terrific force. Hajime, while strengthening its defensive power by cladding the barrier with Vajra, took out a large quantity of rockets and torpedoes from the Treasure Warehouse outside of the barrier, namely, in the belly of the clione.

Once more, the clione's body exploded and scattered together with a thunderous roar. Because it began to melt even with Vajra in a short time, even Hajime and the others who bathed in the shock of the nearby explosion were grandly blown away, and the barrier of ice was also smashed.

They were thrown out into the sea. Hajime remotely controlled and moved the submarine in the sea as he caught Kaori and Shia who could not directly fight underwater.

However, this time the submarine was caught. One part of the huge clione had clung to the ship's bottom before anyone was aware and opened a hole in it. In the gap where the cruising speed dropped as ocean water flowed into the interior of the ship, the surrounding semi-transparent jelly that had been scattered gathered in one go and wrapped up the submarine.

Furthermore, Hajime and the others noticed when they were surfacing that a large amount of semi-transparent jelly was expanding to cover overhead of them. Judging by the huge clione's unusual recovery speed, it was not possible to break through in a halfhearted manner.

While spewing abusive language in his mind at his prided submarine being melted, Hajime called out to Yue with telepathy.

[Yue. I'll rely on you for Spatial Piercing]

[……It will take forty seconds.]

[Hindrances will not be done. To escape from the sea, we have no choice but that.]

[N…… Leave it to me.]

Yue closed her eyes to concentrate and did not move. Kaori and Shia clung to her so that she did not get washed away by the current. The Spatial Piercing that Yue was attempting to use was one of the Space magics that was the Age of Gods magic acquired in Guryuen Conflagration Mountain. Making a hole in a point of two spaces, the space of the two spots were connected. In short, it was magic that made a warp gate. Still, because it hasn't been long since it was learned, being used by Yue it will take that much time.

The tentacles that came attacking, Tio somehow mowed them down with a rapid fire of reduced version breath. However, since the breath's magic power consumption is intense, and since the power and range fall considerably underwater, it was difficult to hit the tentacles because of the straight line attack and the annihilation power was weak. It will likely break through without being held for even several more seconds.

Hajime, taking out ores successively from the Treasure Warehouse, proceeded to continuously use Rensei, and like the barrier of ice that Yue formed not long ago, formed a physical barrier in the shape of a sphere.

[Goshujin-sama! It has already broken through!]

[I was able to do it, so everyone get in!]

The metallic barrier sufficient enough to take in five people was completed, and simultaneously with Tio getting into it last the hole was closed as it became a perfect metal sphere. Furthermore, that metal sphere was covered in red magical power. It was strengthened by Vajra. Tentatively, because gravity stones were also included, it would not keep sinking as well.

Immediately after that, the tentacles rushed the metal sphere, and began to wrap it up in one go.

The semi-transparent jelly that melts even magic power itself immediately destroyed and consumed the Vajra. And then, even the surface of the metal sphere was melted in a moment. However, when thinking that red sparks ran on the metal sphere, metal swelled from the melted edges, and the protective wall was just barely maintained.

That was because Hajime continued to constantly use Rensei from within. Fortunately, there was a kind of ore that was contained

within the Treasure Warehouse to a literally rotting degree. Repeated Rensei seriously as he opposed the rate of melting, and then, the moment he impatiently waited for finally came.

[Spatial Piercing!]

Yue's spatial transference magic was invoked. Within the metal sphere, a shining membrane of an elliptical shape was completed in the immediate vicinity of Hajime and the others. It was the gate that connected space.

[Everybody jump in!]

In accordance with the command of Hajime who continued to use Rensei by applying his hand to the metal sphere, everyone jumped into the gate all at once. Hajime also jumped in last. After Hajime passed through it, the gate immediately terminated, and several seconds later a countless number of tentacles pierced the metal sphere and melted it.

Hajime and the others who passed through the gate were attacked by a terrible floating sensation. It was because the movement done before was to the sky. To be separated from the sea even a little, Yue had established the exit one hundred meters in the sky.

Immediately Tio used Dragonification and floated as she placed Hajime and the others on her back. On Tio's back Yue started to crumble down, and Kaori and Shia supported her from the sides. It was a state of magical power completely drying up. Hurriedly, she replenished it taking out magical power from the magic crystal

stones.

“Yue, you saved us. As expected of you. Space transference is proportionate in difficulty.”

“……Haa haa, n. I did my best. But, it’s still not a level for combat.”

As Yue said, the handling of Space magic was difficult to the extent that it could not be compared with Gravity magic, and in the view of Yue it was still not at a level where it could be used in actual fighting. Much time is taken to construct the magic formation image by means of Imagination Composition, and the magical power efficiency is also still bad, as even though they made a spatial transition of one hundred meters, it was to an extent that it consumed magical power of two times that of superlative magic.

Nevertheless, because of Yue being skilled she was able to attain it and put it to use in a short period, and their escape was able to be done. Admiration was sent freely from Kaori and the others too, and to a certain extent, Yue who blushed was embarrassed.

Though everyone loosened their faces at the situation, the next moment, their expressions became frozen.

Doogooooooooo!!!

Zabaaaaaaaa!!!

Together with such a roaring sound, suddenly a huge tsunami swept down on them from the back of Hajime and the others. No, even calling it huge is presumptuous. Already there was a wall and the sky. The tsunami that seemed to easily exceed five hundred meters in height came to attack while raising wave crests in the distant sky where Tio flew about one hundred meters high in the sky. And the diameter seemed to be about one kilometer.

“Tsk, Tio!”

[Acknowledged!]

Tio recovered herself at Hajime’s shout, and accelerated in one go as she fluttered her wings. There was no escape anyway. Space transition would not be in time. If it was, there was nothing to think about but “To the other side”! She flew with a high speed that seemed to rival the time she escaped from Guryuen Conflagration Mountain.

“–Restraining Seal, Beyond Sage!”

“Beyond Sage.”

Kaori produced a rope of light that connected everyone to prepare for when they would be swallowed, while at the same time she expanded high grade defensive magic together with Yue. Shia gave a warning the next instant as she widened her eyes when concentrating on something.

“Tio-san, be careful! That is inside the tsunami! Tentacles are coming!”

She seemed to have reported the scene that she saw with her characteristic magic Foresight’s derivation Future Assumption. Tio, without even confirming Shia’s words, twisted her body instantaneously. Right afterward, countless tentacles extended from the tsunami and pierced the space where Tio was until now immediately.

She was able to avoid them successfully. However, the difference with the tsunami had been shortened because of that reason. The tentacles that still came attacking, though Hajime intercepted and burned them to ashes with a flamethrower……

“Damn it! Everyone get together!”

Hajime who was on Tio’s back covered Yue, Shia, and Kaori like he was hugging them, and then, right after that, the huge tsunami that should even be called a natural disaster swallowed them.

Because there was the Beyond Sage of the pair of Yue and Kaori, though they did not receive the impact of the tsunami directly, even so they were unreasonably tossed around by the fierce torrent and were sent back into the sea.

One piece of the Beyond Sage was completely smashed, and the other piece was already cracked. Supposing if they had not

expanded anything but one piece, then at about this time they might have gone to a watery grave. Hajime and the others who shook their heads at the shock from being thrown into the sea raised their faces as they made grim expressions again.

“How should I put it, the aimed at prey isn’t let go?”

The huge clione was already in front of Hajime and the others who were protected by Beyond Sage. Furthermore, that figure was becoming even larger, and had already exceeded twenty meters. Was it still insufficient? While gathering semi-transparent jelly from the surroundings, it continued to grow even larger.

“I-it can’t be…… Things like not dying, melting anything, and manipulating even the sea…… What should we do?”

“……Hajime-san. Can you give me a serious kiss? I want to do it with Hajime-san at least at the end.”

“…….Fuu, Goshujin-sama. Me too, I desire a kiss at the end.”

Kaori darkened her expression in despair, and Shia pleaded to Hajime while floating a smile like she was embarrassed. Tio was also the same.

However, the girls who turned their gazes at Hajime shook their bodies with a “Biku”. Because, Hajime’s eye glittered with flames. The glint in his eye was sharp, carrying murderous intent of an

insanely thick degree, and he was glaring at the clione that had become huge as he bared his teeth.

Hajime would not do something like giving up. There was not even a tiny bit of such a thought. What was in his head was: what should they do to kill the enemy before their eyes and how could they survive, it was only just that. Confronted with a formidable enemy of an impossible degree, if that was enough to give up, Hajime would not be standing in this place now. He surely would have perished in the abyss a long time ago.

And, understanding that, surely because they had escaped the verge of death in the abyss together, Yue also still frantically worked out her thoughts without carrying the likes of resignation at all.

At the eyes of Hajime that glittered, Kaori, Shia, and Tio, though they stiffened as they were and gazed at him with expressions that were engrossed for a little while like their hearts had been stolen, they regained their consciousness because the huge clione commenced its attack finally becoming a thirty meter class.

Panicking, Kaori formed Beyond Sage over again. Shia grasped for possibilities of victory with Future Assumption. Tio fired breath. In the girls' eyes, there was no color of giving up anymore. The likes of a brave woman, if that was not a person who should be at Hajime's side, it was because it was thought so.

Yue also, although she had not thought of a plan to to break the deadlock yet, for now she was going to crush both offense and defense for the sake of surviving.

Hajime did not do anything in particular, and just intently worked out his thoughts. In the given time that Yue and the others earned, he continued to search for a path to victory with high speed thoughts while invoking Lightspeed. He ordered himself to recall all of the information there was now. With terrific force within Hajime's brain, the scenes until now flashed back.

And then, he remembered. He and the others had once gotten away from the huge clione. That changed into a question. "Although so much power exists, why did it overlook us once?" At that time, what differed with the present fight? ……That was…

"We're not using fire much."

Right, last time Tio and Yue grandly used magic of the fire system with reckless abandon. That time, the tentacles became ash, and should not have been used to regenerate.

Hajime found hope there. Though it was a guess without positive proof, probably, the regeneration of the clione was not infinite. The semi-transparent jelly that composed its body and appeared to be equal to infinite existed in mass quantities.

Also, it appeared likely that it was able to even create it on its own just by seeing the situation until now. Though, if it were annihilated in one go, it might need time to replace it. Therefore, last time because it replaced a large quantity of its annihilated body, it prioritized regeneration over pursuit, and Hajime and the others seemed to have been able to escape.

In that case, it was the same. It was fine if they could annihilate it faster that it could create or regenerate the semi-transparent jelly that composed the clione. However, this place was in the sea. It was sufficient to say that fire magic could not be used the most effectively as one might think. Though Tio's breath is high temperature, it did not seem to be able to finish annihilating it. There was no method. There were no stored arms that could annihilate it. In that case……

"It's just fine if I make it."

Hajime, taking out torpedoes and ore successively from the Treasure Warehouse, began to produce something with terrific force for some reason.

"……Hajime? Did you think of something?"

"Yeah. To use fire in the sea there's no choice but this. It should defeat it if it goes smoothly."

"Hajime-kun, is that true!?"

"As expected of Hajime-san! I believed in you from the beginning!"

"……Shia, you, didn't you solicit a kiss as you gave up in the beginning……? No, that aside, that's our Goshujin-sama!"

“However, it will take time. You all, I’ll leave it to you.”

At Hajime who said so while smiling fearlessly as he lifted his lips, Kaori, Shia, and Tio immediately nodded their heads strongly, and even more, they confronted the huge clione increasing their concentration.

Hajime expanded his perception ability to the maximum using Lightspeed, and furthermore he demonstrated concentration power that exceeded the limit by using Limit Break at the same time too as he poured all of his power into the weapon creation.

One, though he completed another one, the mass production in one go does not go like the bullets whose degree of difficulty to create is extremely high. Nevertheless, when using them sporadically, the huge clione might finish regenerating or creating the semi-transparent jelly. The situation would gradually get worse if it became so. If he was going to do it in, he should do it in instantly. While wearing red magical power — the proof of Limit Break, Hajime’s frantic Rensei was repeated.

However, reality is heartless. As far as the huge clione is concerned in the sea was a place of its overwhelming advantage, and even with Yue and the others of the cheat group doing it, they did not seem able to rival it for long.

Though Yue, Kaori, Shia, and Tio were desperately standing firm with expressions that seemed strained, they did not seem to be able to hold out until the preparation was complete.

[Three minutes, the end at most, if there is three minutes!]

While invoking telepathy instinctively, Hajime shouted so. Finally, the huge clione whose fierce attacks they could not contain approached before their eyes, and swept down to swallow Hajime and the others as its head split with a Gapa!

Hajime reluctantly decided to fire even though it was only as much as he was able to now to try to survive this moment.

But, at that moment, neither Yue, Shia, Tio, nor Kaori either, it was a refined old man's voice that responded to Hajime's shout with telepathy.

[Yo, Ha-bou. Doesn't it seem dangerous? Occhan will help you out.]

[-!? T-this voice, it can't be, Li-san?]

[Yeah. Ha-bou's friend, it's Li-san.]

Yes, having appeared, the one who had been captured in Fyuren's aquarium before, it was the human faced fish demon Lieman who Hajime called Li-san. Hajime, when he looked at the surroundings as he widened his eyes in surprise, suddenly a huge silver shadow rammed a hit into the huge clione's body from the side. The huge

clione that was in a posture of just being about to prey upon them as it opened its mouth was blown away as it received the perfect surprise attack, and was pushed away.

In that space, the human faced fish that was certainly remembered swam to the immediate vicinity of the Beyond Sage. At the abrupt situation, Yue and the others also were completely not able to follow. Seeing Lieman's figure, Yue and Tio stared in wonder, Shia widened her eyes in surprise with "That time!", and arriving at Kaori, she screamed with a "Hii!?"

[Was Shia jou-chan also in good health?]

"Fue!? Um, y-yes! I'm healthy."

[That is splendid. Then, Ha-bou, what are you doing lazily? If you had three more minutes, would you be able to deal with the Akujiki somehow? If you have to do it, do it quickly. Do you not have so long?]

[Y-yeah. Although something wasn't understood well, at any rate you saved us. Thank you, Li-san.]

Hajime moved the hand he had stopped at the sudden appearance of Lieman, and resumed the weapon creation in a hurry.

Meanwhile, the huge silver shadow, suicide attacking the huge clione, bought time doing an exchanging of attacks. Somehow or

other, the silver shadow's true identity seemed to be a group of fish. They were not even demons or the like and were just fish. Though they were just fish, tens of thousands, or, if the number equaled several hundreds of thousands, it seemed that even a monster opponent was able to be held off. Because they decreased in number by the staggering force, certainly, they did not seem able to keep it up for long.

Why was Lieman here? Shia, who was put out ahead forcibly as the representative because she seemed to be an acquaintance, asked that question.

[U-um, Li-san? Is that fine? Uh, what in the world is going on?]

[Hmph, it isn't anything in particular. As I was properly hanging around this area, a telepathic communication was heard accompanied by a huge, familiar magical power. What I saw when I rushed over, wasn't it Ha-bou being attacked by the Akujiki? Though there were a lot of questions, it was my friend's crisis. It is the shame of a man to not do anything.]

"Uh, that group of fish…… is the Akujiki in it?"

[The Akujiki is that thing. Long ago, a monster that haunted the sea from ancient times… no, that fellow is a natural disaster. It could also be called an ancestor of demons. That crowd of fish is being guided by my ability. To our species that uses telepathy, the ability is possessed to manipulate the normal sea creatures to a certain extent.]

A surprising fact came to light. The human faced fish Lieman seemed to have been a fish user. The group of fish was almost destroyed in the timing that Lieman's conversation ended, and the huge clione again attacked while opening its mouth as it went toward Hajime and the others.

However, the time that was earned by the noble sacrifice…… was precisely three minutes.

A group of larger than normal torpedoes were spread out in the surroundings of the Beyond Sage that enclosed Hajime and the others. The number was roughly 120. And, rings of the same number floated in the surroundings of Hajime who smiled fearlessly.

When Hajime activated the induction stone on hand, the group of torpedoes were shot all at once. 120 torpedoes rushed towards the huge clione that had opened its mouth at high speed while drawing a line of bubbles. However, only the torpedoes, because they would just scatter the body of the huge clione even if they exploded, there would not be substantial damage either and it seemed that it would immediately regenerate.

The huge clione attempted to intercept the group of torpedoes, sending out a large number of tentacles as it was upset at them becoming a hindrance to its meal, and everyone stared ahead wondering what they should do. Hajime who had exceeded the limit manipulated the torpedoes with the very limit of his concentration power and barely evaded them.

"Are you not going to avoid them? Then, I'll let you eat to your heart's content."

Hajime's mutter resounded. The huge clione that was previously the Akujiki, at the reason that it was able to melt anything, Hajime thought that might have been why it did not avoid the attack.

And then, the expectation was correct. The group of torpedoes that had finished dodging the barrage of tentacles directly hit and pierced into the huge clione's whole body uniformly without it even showing an attitude of avoiding them.

However, an explosion did not happen. Buried in the huge clione's body, although they were melting there was not an explosion of even one shot. The huge clione that had embedded the group of black torpedoes throughout its body was in a state like a flecked pattern was made as if poison had invaded the previous position.

Hajime, before the group of torpedoes completely melted, carried out the next move. He took out a massive quantity of black liquid into the empty space from the Treasure Warehouse. It was the tar that was made from liquified Flamme ore. To the inside of the surrounding floating rings, it was poured there like a waterfall.

Then at the same time, the whole body of the huge clione began to be stained black. As though, like water soaking into paper and changing its color all at once, the black liquid was encroaching on the semi-transparent, huge clione. The identity was the tar of liquefied Flamme ore that Hajime had poured into the surrounding rings.

These rings and the group of torpedoes, all of them were connected by a small gate. What passed through the inside of the ring jumped

through space and arrived at the same ring used as an exit that had been built into the inside of the torpedoes. In other words, the torpedoes were not explosives, they were things to carry the rings, and at the same time, they were also a physical barrier of the rings while sending in the tar.

Naturally, though the tar itself was also melted, because of the total of 120 gates, the melting speed of the large quantity of tar that poured in without pause could not catch up to the encroachment of its whole body by the tar.

In an instant, the huge clione, though it tried to escape the encroachment by separating its body, Yue and the others did not allow it. The separation was thoroughly hindered with a barrier, freezing, and breath. Still, Yue's gate was unable to be used because she was not able to open the gate on a pinpoint on a moving target yet. To be able to do it, two established points of space just had to be connected.

The huge clione, because it became serious, though it had been on the verge of finishing off Hajime and the others by a war potential with a volume of the maximum class done by gathering the semi-transparent jelly of the surroundings, now it had backfired. The tar that Hajime poured into it finished dyeing the huge clione black without leaving anything in the end.

Hajime, as he curved his mouth, he pierced the huge clione with fiery, glittering eyes. In his hand a tiny ember was being held.

"Burn in hellfire from inside of the body and die."

The ember that was flicked by Hajime's thumb, while drawing an arc, it hit directly like it was being inhaled in one of the tars that was pouring down. At that moment, a scorching heat of 3000 degrees Celsius surged and spread through the gate instantly.

Not long ago, it was dyed black, and the huge clione had tried to melt the tar inside its body with an atmosphere that it felt desperation somewhere, and this time, it had become dyed a scorching red. As Hajime said, from inside of its body, hellfire that was not able to be opposed did not allow even a moment of resistance, and its body was completely burned.

A large, crimson flower that bloomed in the sea finally appeared from inside the body of the huge clione accompanied by the coloring of a name called a mass of bubbles in the sea, and it was destroyed, frying even through the exterior. And then, the super high temperature flames raised a violent steam explosion as they evaporated the ocean water in an instant.

Goobaaaaaaa!!!

A terrific impact surged, and the distant sea burst open like a joke. In the sea that was also still raging, it was a state like a storm was called in. Inside the rough sea, Hajime and the others who let the impact go past them searched for the form of the huge clione beyond the barrier.

Though their gazes went around without negligence in the sea that was calming down moment by moment…… the form of the clione that was like a nightmare was nowhere to be seen. Hajime, though he carefully investigated using the magic eye stone and Farsight, as expected the huge clione's traces were not reflected.

Hajime and the others were convinced. The monster of ancient times — the Akujiki subjugation had been completed here.

“Guh…… Somehow, is it over……?”

The rings that had floated in the surroundings scattered and sank as they lost their power, and the red magical power that covered Hajime’s body also quickly dispersed and vanished. At the same time, Hajime who staggered by the side effect of Limit Break went down on one knee inside the barrier of Beyond Sage, and distorted his expression from an intense headache because of overworking.

However, in his eyes that said “I killed it!”, great joy overflowed at having survived victoriously.

“……Hajime, are you alright?”

“Hajime-kun, I’ll heal you immediately!”

Yue immediately approached Hajime’s side and supported his body. Kaori also went to heal Hajime as she chanted recovery magic immediately. Shia and Tio also came to approach at the sides and embraced Hajime.

“You did it! Hajime-san!”

“As expected of Goshujin-sama…… you made a harsh killing scene. I felt chills.”

At Kaori’s healing, while feeling his headache lessen a little at a time, Hajime also loosened his cheeks at his companions that had gathered. While soaking in the reverberations of their victory, when it became peaceful, an old man’s voice who seemed to be a little displeased resounded.

[Yoo, Ha-bou. Please tell me if it’s going to explode. Didn’t you consider if I might die?]

[Ah, Li-san. Sorry. I thought about nothing but what I was killing.]

Apparently, Lieman seemed to have been completely blown away by the last explosion. Because he had used all of his power to kill the huge clione, his consciousness had not been turned toward Lieman. Moreover, the last explosion was not something Hajime had intended. For a bit, Hajime had also been surprised.

[Well, can it not be helped if it was to kill the Akujiki? Whatever was done, it was splendid.]

[If Li-san hadn’t come it would have been seriously terrible. Thank you.]

[You’re welcome. Well, I only stuck to my moral code. Don’t worry about it.]

[You're an honorable man as usual. As expected of Li-san. I'm thankful too for the coincidence that you were here.]

[Ha-bou, coincidences that have accumulated, isn't it already called inevitable? That Occhan was able to assist you was also inevitable, and that you survived like this is also an inevitability.]

Hajime loosened his mouth with a "hah" the same with the fish with the old man face that smiled broadly. At the two people who were communicating something to each other, the female formation in the background were discussing together with whispers.

"……What's that? Aren't they excessively communicating something with each other?"

"……Honorable man's friendship?"

"Hajime-kun…… the friend that he was able to make in the other world is a Seama○? Even in Japan the appearance of him hitting it off with someone to that extent wasn't seen!"(TN: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Seaman_%28video_game%29)

"There was such a feeling even before. Girls' talk can't help becoming boys' talk if it's a guy? Well, though the other party is an old man……"

From themselves, to the intimate atmosphere of Hajime and Lieman of a certain meaning, when Yue and the others turned complex expressions towards them without either trembling or bewilderment attached, the two people's conversation also seemed to have just ended.

[Then, Occhan is already going. Ha-bou. Let us meet again if fate allows.]

[Yeah. Li-san also take care.]

With one mutual nod, Lieman turned back. However, when looking back as he advanced a little, he talked to Shia.

[Jou-chan. There seems to be many rivals, but do your best. When you are able to have children, let's have them play with my children sometime. I will introduce my wife also. See you.]

When leaving only those words, without looking back this time, he disappeared into the ocean as he was.

Those that remained behind……

“”””””You were married—!!?”””””””

It was a grand tsukkomi of such a Hajime and company. Though he put on the airs of a wanderer, when thinking that he possessed a

family, nothing but a normal useless old man was seen. For awhile, their tsukkomi echoed in the ocean.

Chapter 96 - Oath With The Daughter

“Papa-! It’s morning-! Wake up-!”

At a corner of the maritime town Erisen, an infant’s voice resounded in the second floor of a certain house. The time, passing through the early morning slowly, was around when one started to feel the warmth of the day. From the window, like forecasting that it will become good weather today as well, the morning sun streamed in brilliantly.

Dosun!

“Aa～?”

It was Hajime who was fast asleep in bed that was being shined on by such a morning sun. And, calling such a Hajime Papa was Myuu who came to wake him up with an energetic voice.

Myuu, when determining the magnificent leap that does not make the weight felt just before the bed, the landing of a ten point perfect score was determined on the belly of Hajime who was her Papa as it was. Of course, it was not from her feet. It was a form that became her straddling him.

Although she was still a four year old child, the body weight was already around 15-6 kilograms. If such a weight jumps on the

abdomen with added force, a normal person should even let out a groan, but naturally Hajime does not feel any kind of pain. Nevertheless, a sleepy groan did come out because of the forced way he was woken up.

“Papa, get up. It’s morning. Good morning.”

“……Aah, Myuu? Morning. Please stop *pechipechi*-ing since I’m up.”

Was she happy that Hajime had woken up? While showing a bright smile, Myuu drummed on Hajime’s face with *pechipechi* sounds with hands like tiny red leaves. Hajime, when holding Myuu as he raised his upper body while doing a morning greeting, he combed her emerald green hair gently. At Myuu who narrowed her eyes like it felt good, Hajime’s cheeks also loosened.

“……N……au……Hajime? Myuu?”

Inside such a heartwarming atmosphere, all of a sudden, a voice that made one feel seductiveness somewhere resounded. Hajime, when turning the sheets a little as he shifted his attention that way, the sleepy figure of a beautiful girl rubbing her eyes with the back of her curled up hand like a cat was there.

Long blonde hair hung down in waves that was not bed hair at all even though she had been lying down, and it sparkled because of the morning sun pouring in from the window, causing her to blink her crimson eyes that were the same as red spinel. Because she was not wearing clothes the same as Hajime, with her pure white skin

without a single blemish, the pair of hills that could be seen from the gaps of her hair that hung down the front made one feel seductiveness together with loveliness coupled with the sound of her voice.

“How come Papa and Yue-oneechan are always naked?”

Myuu’s innocent question meant “the time they got up in the morning” to the utmost. By no means did it mean that the pair were nudists.

And, seeming to wonder, “Maybe they don’t have pajamas?”, Myuu looked alternately at Hajime and Yue with eyes that were possibly seeing someone a little pitiable. To the childishly pure question, with the likes of “That is, you, because clothes are obstructive?”, Hajime, who must not have even been able to do a response that was mistaken for sexual harassment, requested Yue to help him with a slightly troubled expression.

In her consciousness that cleared up gradually, Yue who guessed Hajime’s distress returned an adult’s template to the child’s innocent question.

“……Myuu will also come to understand it if you become even bigger.”

“You understand when you become bigger?”

“……N, you understand.”

To Myuu who tilts her head, Yue avoided clearly answering by force. Myuu’s sex education was left to Remia who was her mother. However, Myuu who tilted her head to the side with an expression like she was not quite able to agree with an “U～n”, when looking back slowly, she let out an innocent question again while staring at a certain spot, and cornered mainly Hajime.

“Papa also, do you know why this place became big? But, Myuu doesn’t have this. Myuu doesn’t understand?”

Saying so, at a certain place where the characteristic morning physiological phenomenon was caused, Myuu started to drum on it with her hands going *peshipeshi*. Although it was not with a significant power, Hajime, who shook at the impact on his delicate place, fixed how he held Myuu in a hurry to separate her as much as possible from “that”.

“Myuu, don’t touch that. Listen. It’s natural for Myuu who is a girl to not have it. It’s fine if you don’t worry about it. Another ten years, no, twenty years, better yet your whole life, it’s something you don’t have to be concerned with no matter what.”

Hajime said something foolish with an extremely serious face. Myuu nodded her head with a *kokuri* because it was something said by her beloved Papa even while floating “?” in her mind. Making a somehow satisfied expression at that, Hajime again untangled Myuu’s hair by combing it with his hand. Myuu also, like her questions from just now were forgotten, started to concentrate on being satisfied by that gentle feeling.

To such a Hajime, a gaze was turned towards him like feeling amused somewhere from Yue who was next to him. In those eyes, “Overprotective”, “Energetic because of the morning”, and “One advantage because of the morning?”, such feelings of this or that seemed to be contained in them.

Hajime faced the other way at that. Inside the warmth that increased a little at a time because of the light of day, that heartwarming scene continued until Remia and Kaori and the others, who fretted at the situation where Myuu did not come to wake them up, came crowding into it.

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Hajime and the others, capturing Merujine Undersea Ruins, had returned to Erisen by getting on the back of Tio who used Dragonification because they had lost the submarine, and again six days had passed since they had supplied topics to the town. Since the day they had returned, Hajime and the others had been indebted to the house of Remia and Myuu throughout.

The town called Erisen was a floating island of intertwined wood with a huge population. Since the vast sea itself becomes an infinite plot of land, the whole town became an appearance where there is basically space made in the architecture and in the streets. Remia’s and Myuu’s house also, the largeness of it was more than enough for a house with two people living in it, and it was a comfortable living space to the extent that even with the five people of Hajime and the others staying there they did not even feel any inconvenience.
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Thereupon they set aside time to replenish their equipment and master the Age of Gods magic that they had obtained. Though half of it was a vacation mood because Erisen had perfected seafood cooking, the wind and waves were also pleasant, and the location was very comfortable.

But, nevertheless, they felt that the rest was over a little on staying the sixth day. The reason, it goes without saying, was Myuu. It was not possible to take Myuu along on the journey beyond this point. A four year old girl without even any sort of power, it was absurd to take her along to the Great Labyrinth of the far east.

Not to mention that the two Great Labyrinths excluding Hartsina Sea of Trees were in even more troublesome locations. One was in the Majin tribe's territory, the Freezing Cave of Schnee Snow Field. And the other one was surely that whatever Kamiyama. For either of them, they would need to go into the heart of a great power. To such a location, they were absolutely unable to take Myuu along.

Because of that, though they should bid farewell to this town, was it guessed somehow? When Hajime and the others tried to start that conversation, Myuu always went into ultra spoiled child mode, and they could not easily start talking because she invoked "Certain kill! Little Girl, Petition of Silence!" Eventually, dragging on the Age of Gods magic's training and the new equipment's completion, they stayed even the sixth day even though it was a made up excuse.

"Even so, if I don't make reasonable departure……haa, what should I say to Myuu……will she cry, I wonder? Her crying…… haa, it's depressing."

Hajime, while preparing some equipment with Rensei as he sat on the pier, muttered a soliloquy in seeming melancholy. The time when he had just exited from hell, although he thought that all of this world was inconsequential, now he was racking his brains at one farewell with a small child. At such a present state, in his mind, Hajime held complex feelings.

“I blame you, Sensei……”

To discard everything of this world, the thinking that did not dislike all of the sacrifices for the sake of just his objective had completely vanished, and Hajime used abusive language remembering his former teacher who was the impetus that led him to carrying such thoughts. However, Yue, Shia, Kaori, and Tio in front of his eyes, and seeing the smiling face of Myuu who was playing a game of underwater tag with the girls, the smile he floated on his face was the opposite of his words.

When it was unrelated to him, at that time, if he had abandoned Myuu, or if he had left Ankaji as it was, then if he left Remia alone, and if he quickly separated from Myuu…… surely, the girls might not have those first rate smiling faces.

Even if he discarded them for example, though it was separate from Yue and the others feeling unhappiness and it might not be a cause for their smiles to disappear, but could they possibly compare to those being shown now? That was surely because there was no doubt that the way it was for Hajime until this place was not “the lonely way of life”.

While watching Myuu who was enjoying the irregular game of tag splendidly running from place to place from the incarnations of

cheats with all of her power(everyone excluding Myuu was “it”) as she perfectly showed the traits of the Sea-person tribe, again, Hajime let out a sigh. From between both legs of such a Hajime that were stretched out from the pier, suddenly a person’s figure appeared making a splashing sound. Having appeared dripping water from in the sea, it was Remia who was Myuu’s mother.

Remia, who had her long, emerald green hair in one loose braid on her back, was wearing a splendidly suggestive, light green bikini. At first when she reunited with Myuu she was considerably haggard, but now, having perfectly regained her previous healthy body because of the recovery effects of the foul play class Reproduction magic, you would not think that she was the mother of a child, no, it was so but she was clad in her former seductiveness.

The man company of the town, all of them aimed at being her second marriage partner, as she was a gentle system beauty, to the extent that one could nod even if there was a strange fan club of the mother and child set. She boasted a splendid figure almost equal with Tio, and the drops of water that ran off the surface of her body were absolutely bewitching.

Such a Remia, who was charming even under normal circumstances, appeared between his thighs suddenly. Hajime, who was racking his brains about Myuu, was inadvertently taken by surprise. Remia, as she supported her body setting her hands on Hajime’s lap, she looked up at Hajime from a place that was a considerably dangerous position.

However, in her face was the opposite of the position and the body that emitted seductiveness, and in Remia’s kind expression, instead it carried a color like she was worrying about Hajime.

“Thank you very much. Hajime-san.”

“What is it all of a sudden? Something like saying thanks……”

Hajime made an expression like he was doubtful at Remia who stated her gratitude suddenly.

“Ufufu, the person who also worries so much for the sake of the daughter……as her mother I also came to want to say one expression of gratitude.”

“That……was it found out? For the time being, though I was intending to hide it.”

“Ara ara, there wasn’t a person who didn’t know? Yue-san and the others also all seem to be thinking about it…… Myuu was able to meet with really wonderful people.”

As Remia looked back over her shoulder, though Shia had been stripped of her swimsuit by Myuu’s prank, even though they saw her figure chasing Myuu frantically while making a hand bra, she was showing a smile. And, again when turning her gaze to Hajime, this time she opened her mouth with an expression that was a little serious.

“Hajime-san. It’s already enough. Everyone has done more than

enough. Therefore, please don't be worried, and go forward for the sake of the things that you must do."

"Remia……"

"Meeting with everyone, that child has grown up greatly. Although she only behaved like a spoiled child, she has come to be able to worry about someone other than herself…… That girl understands. That Hajime-san and the others have to go…… although she completely acted like a spoiled child unintentionally because she is still immature, even so, 'Don't go,' was never said, right? That child also knows that it is wrong to detain you all more than this. Therefore……"

"……Is that so? ……If I'm being worried about by a child, it's not taking care of her……I got it. Tonight, I've decided to tell her clearly. Tomorrow, we'll depart."

Myuu's silent appeal, though she didn't want them to go, he noticed that it was a manifestation of her fear about not wanting to trouble Hajime and the others by saying it, and Hajime, who looked up at the sky as he covered his eyes with one hand, became determined to say farewell. To such a Hajime, Remia again turned a gentle gaze towards him.

"Then, tonight let's have a feast. Because it's Hajime-san's and the others' farewell party."

"That's right…… I'm looking forward to it."

“Ufufu, yes, please look forward to it, D*e*a*r?”

“No, that way of calling is……”

To Remia who was floating a mischievous smile somewhere, though Hajime started to insert a tsukkomi, because of a voice that contained a chill like a blizzard, it was interrupted like always.

“……Remia……good courage.”

“Remia-san, since when…… There was neither negligence nor a chance.”

“Fumu, by the angle seen, she even seems to be servicing Goshujin-sama…… Exposure play…… nice!”

“Um, Myuu-chan? Onee-chan’s swimsuit, can’t you return it soon? The public gaze from some time ago is……”

Yue and the others who returned to Hajime’s location unnoticed glared at Remia with half closed eyes. “It can’t be, is she aiming at Hajime for a second marriage partner for real?” seemed to be what was making them vigilant. These last few days, it was a sight seen often. The pervert was ignored. The swimsuit stolen by the four year old girl and the half crying rabbit ears were also ignored.

On the other hand, if one were to speak of Remia, who was in a state of being glared at, the appearance of her pulling back was not especially seen because she merely smiled with, “Ara ara, ufufu.” That easy breezy smile, because it hid Remia’s true feelings, the approach that was shown sometimes towards Hajime was difficult to distinguish whether she was being serious or joking. This, is it said to be a widow’s dignity or something……?

If speaking of the Hajime in question, he was captivated by the swimsuit appearance of Yue who was glaring at Remia in a state of crawling on all fours as she raised herself onto the pier. Though he saw her every day, his gaze was attracted at an unconscious level already.

It was a black bikini type. It was splendidly suggestive because it was the type that was tied by a string. The contrast coupled with Yue’s skin’s whiteness was exceedingly lovely. Doing up her hair in a rare twintail, although it made her feel more childish than normal, the gap one felt with the adult-like swimsuit was unbearable for Hajime.

Yue who was hurling sparks with Remia, when she noticed Hajime’s gaze, she spilled a smile seemingly in good humor with a “……Fufu,” because it seemed like she guessed that his heart had been stolen by her, and she approached Hajime as she was on all fours.

However, when she was absolutely not permitted to be far ahead forever, Kaori took Hajime’s arm from the other side. She pressed Hajime’s arm into the cleavage that peeked out from the white bikini with a *munyu*, although she was dyed red up to her ears from embarrassment. Her glance that looked at Hajime with upturned eyes was appealing in silence with “Look at me too?”

Furthermore, Shia from behind leaned on him while pressing her prided pair of hills onto Hajime's back. Because her swimsuit was still taken by Myuu, she seemed to have the intention to hide her body too. But, for Hajime, besides the first-rate softness, the characteristic feeling of the two that were touching him was a place where he was extremely troubled.

Incidentally, though Tio also displayed a very charming swimsuit appearance, because the feeling was very bad as she started "Haa Haa"-ing in her delusion, Hajime made her cool off her head by force as he attacked with the piece of metal he was holding. That being the case, currently she had become a drowned body.

Like that, to the location of Hajime who was surrounded by by beautiful women and girls, Myuu came rising to the surface from in the sea. Myuu, who appeared like she was cutting in between Hajime and Remia, she jumped at Hajime as she was from the front. To Hajime who caught her in his arms in an instant, Myuu, with "Taken booty!" just hoisted Shia's swimsuit and placed it on Hajime's head. Apparently, it seemed to be a gift from his daughter.

"Mi-Myuu-chan!? Why, such a thing……is!? It can't be…… was it requested by Hajime-san? Re-really! Hajime-san, if my swimsuit was on your mind, if you said so…… as much as you liked……"

"……Hajime, I'll give mine too."

"M-me too! If Hajime-kun wants it…… but because it's embarrassing undressing here…… in the room later, alright?"

“Ara ara, then, me too…… Top or bottom, which one is better? Or else, both of them?”

Placing a woman’s swimsuit on his head, a man to whom girls from all sides were presenting swimsuits, Nagumo Hajime.

The water that dripped from Shia’s swimsuit with a *potapota* was quite surreal coupled together with Hajime’s expression that had stiffened his face. The man company who witnessed that scene were made to drop tears of blood. And, to what extent did rumors spread in the area that day? With a story of, “Be careful of the white haired eye-patch boy. That guy’s favorite dish is stripped off swimsuits. He is a pervert that finds supreme delight in wearing them from his head.”

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The evening of that day, Hajime and the others informed Myuu of their farewell before dinner. Myuu who heard it grasped the hem of the one piece she wore tightly with both hands with a *gyu*, and earnestly resisted crying. The short silence continued for awhile, and it was Myuu who broke it.

“……We can’t meet anymore?”

“……”
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It was a question that he was hard pressed to answer. Hajime's goal was to return to Japan which was his birthplace. However, the concrete method was not yet known, and he did not know in what timing or in the shape of how he would return.

Before, Miledi Raisen said to collect all of the Age of Gods magics if he wanted to fulfill his wish. Perhaps it might become a thing where he immediately returned in that timing. Because it seemed that there was no need to come back to Erisen until the end of the journey, possibly, he could not deny the possibility that this would become the final farewell.

"……Papa, will you always stay Myuu's Papa?"

To Hajime who was troubled over how he should answer, Myuu piled up words before listening to the reply. Hajime met her gaze directly and firmly grasped both of Myuu's shoulders.

"……Myuu, if that is your wish."

When replying so, Myuu made a smile with a *ni* as she loosened her mouth that had been clenched to resist tears. It was Yue and the others who made a *ha* in their expressions. In some respects it resembled Hajime's expression at a time when he was challenging a difficult fight, and, for an instant, they appeared like a true parent and child.

"Then, take care. And, next time, Myuu is going to go meet Papa."

“Going to meet……Myuu. I’m planning to go very far away. Therefore……”

“But, if Papa can go, then Myuu can go too. After all…… because Myuu is Papa’s daughter.”

For she who was worthy of being Hajime’s daughter nothing was impossible. Sticking out her chest as she seemed to be self-confident, if Hajime could not come to meet her, Myuu made a declaration to go to meet him herself. Of course, it did not mean that Myuu accurately understood that Hajime was going to be returning to his birthplace by crossing over worlds. Not to mention, the likes of Myuu obtaining all of the Age of Gods magics capturing the Labyrinths or crossing over worlds was impossible.

And so, it was an impossible objective to realize that came out from the child’s poor conception.

However, who in the world would laugh at that powerful declaration? Who in the world would foolishly discard her will? It was impossible to do. It should not be done. The words Remia said about Myuu having grown was well understood. Myuu, though it was a short time, nevertheless she came to grow watching the reliable backs of Hajime and the others. Can such a beloved daughter be parted with now? Was it fine to part with her? No, there was no way such a thing could be done. There was no way that doing it was fine.

Because of this, Hajime decided. Now, as he made one more vow here.

“Myuu, please wait.”

“Papa?”

Myuu, who sensed that Hajime’s atmosphere changed, tilted her head as she made a face that seemed curious. Until just now, there was not at all an expression that was worried anywhere, and the straightforward gaze that was always powerful pierced Myuu’s eyes. It was the eye that Myuu had always watched.

“When everything is over. I will come back to Myuu’s place without fail. Taking everyone, we will come to meet Myuu.”

“……Really?”

“Yeah, really. Have I ever told a lie to Myuu?”

At Hajime’s words, Myuu shook her head with a *furufuru*. Hajime gently stroked such a Myuu’s hair.

“When I come back, next time I’ll take Myuu along too. And, my home town, I’ll show you the place I was born. You’ll surely be surprised. Because my home town is a place like a surprise box.”

“! The place Papa was born? I want to see!”

“Are you looking forward to it?”

“A lot!”

Myuu made a delighted expression while jumping up and down with a *pyonpyon*. At such a Myuu, Hajime gently narrowed his eyes. Myuu, who smiled with her whole face had blown away the anxiety over the matter of meeting with Hajime again, and without changing the force of hopping up and down, she jumped at Hajime. Hajime, who caught her firmly, held Myuu in his arms as it was.

“Than, can you be a good girl waiting with Mama? Don’t do something dangerous. Listening well to what Mama says, can you do your best to help?”

“Yes!”

Hajime made an apology with his gaze to Remia who was staring at the exchange of the two such people while smiling. With, “Sorry, I decided it selfishly.”

In contrast with that, when Remia slowly shook her head, she nodded as she matched gazes with Hajime firmly. With, “Please don’t worry about it.” That warm gaze, there was not even a bit of the color of condemnation, instead it contained feelings of gratitude.

Was the eye contact of such a Papa and Mama noticed? While

Myuu watched Hajime and Remia alternatively, she pulled Hajime's clothes with a *kuikui*.

"Papa, Mama too? Is Mama also the same?"

"Aah, that's……Remia?"

"Yes, what is it, dear? You're not saying that only I am left out, right?"

"No, that is so, but…… seriously, this place is 'another world'?"

"Ara ara, to the place that the daughter and husband go, is there any way that I won't follow? Ufufu."

With Hajime holding the daughter, the figure of Remia nestled close to there. It was a normal married couple. Kaori and the others cut in as if to say, "Like we'll let you-!" and the tumult spread. Where did the serious mood that was done in the beginning go? With Kaori and the others and Remia unfolding a war of smiles, to Hajime who was left out of it before anyone noticed, Yue stepped up with a *tokotoko*.

"……You're taking them along?"

"Are you against it?"

When Hajime responded so to Yue's question, Yue shook her head, staring at Hajime with a gentle look somewhere, and replied.

"……If it is something that Hajime decided."

"Is that so?"

"……But, what about if you can't choose the timing?"

It was the same question as Hajime's concern. Obtaining the Age of Gods magics, assuming that he even obtained the means to return to his home town somehow, it was not necessarily so that he could cross over worlds at a time whenever he liked. Or, there was fully the possibility too of it becoming a situation that was different from what he promised with Myuu. If it became such a thing, Myuu's heart would surely be deeply wounded.

However, when Hajime shrugged his shoulders, he turned a strong look that carried determination towards Yue while floating a smile on his mouth. Yue also, because she just tried to ask tentatively, her mouth loosened like the reply was said that it was understood.

"I'll do it one way or another. No matter what I'll return to the place of Myuu, and show her Japan too. If we crossed over worlds leaving Myuu, then by all means, it's fine if we come back to this world again. It's fine if we cross over worlds any number of times. Is that the only difference?"

“……N. Only that.”

Floating smiles that they were understanding each other, Hajime and Yue matched their gazes closely. Yue thought she was feeling happy that Hajime was able to value something to the extent that he made a vow. Hajime also, appreciating that sort of her, again filled his heart loving Yue who was smiling at him. As always, Hajime’s and Yue’s combination ability “Pink Space” was invoked.

Neglecting the others’ tumult, to Hajime and Yue who were making a world of just two people, already Kaori and the others made amazed expressions. However, to Myuu who was the daughter, such an ability seemed not to apply, and when she forced her way between them magnificently, she demanded to be held again to Hajime-papa. Although they made a promise to meet again, it did not change that they were separating for awhile. The last night seemed to become a situation where she acted spoiled with all her might.

The next day, Hajime and the others, seen off by Myuu and Remia, began a trip from the marine town Erisen.

Chapter 97

by

https://elementalcobalt.wordpress.com/2016/04/16/arifureta-chapter-97/

It's been a day and half since they set foot once again into the world of brown.

Hajime aimed straight for the Ankaji (Ancadi) dukedom with the help of the magical powered four-wheeler while great heaps of dust rose from behind. Their original destination was the Sea of Trees, but they changed directions because they thought they might be able to repair the oasis if Koari used her reproduction magic.

The reproduction magic has the effect of literally returning anything back to its original form. So Hajime judged that he should be able to restore the polluted oasis, succeeding with reproduction where recovery magic's purification failed.

Hajime had no reason to particularly object. They hadn't had a chance to try the local specialty fruits last time, so he easily took Kaori's suggestion to return.

Unlike last time, the entrance to Ankaji was full of people waiting in line. A lot of big wagons lined up, and judging from the atmosphere, it felt like a line of merchants.

“That’s a very large caravan.” Hajime stated flatly.

“…. Nn… will take time.” Yue added.

“They’re probably bringing in new supplies?” Kaori suggested.

Kaori’s guess seemed to be right. The reason behind the long line was from relief request from the Heilig Kingdom. Merchants were taking advantage of the troop’s movement and traveled with the relief corps. The Heilig relief corps seemed to accept the Ankaji merchants as long as they didn’t cause problems.

Anyway, because the oasis had been ruined, other than the stockpiled crops, it was necessary to destroy the tainted crops for safety reasons. This caused a large need for food as well as water. Ankaji couldn’t afford to be choosy who they got help from.

Hajime disregarded the caravan. Not wanting to wait under the desert heat, he drove the four wheeler up to the gate without waiting in line.

People of the caravan began to notice the black object and started to run, their hearts likely screaming out “Is that a demon they’re sitting in?” Towards the dangerous stares mixed with fear and wariness, Hajime brandished his weapon as the vehicle approached the gatekeeper in a cloud of dust.

As they drew near, the soldiers saw the 4 wheeler and suddenly

became noisy. They moved to challenge Hajime, but colleagues who recognized the 4 wheeler convinced them to approach without their weapons. As they approach Hajime, they dispatch a messenger to run back to the city.

Hajime and his company left the 4 wheeler while ignoring the chaos their presence caused. As always, several people are enchanted by Yue's good looks. As Hajime placed the 4 wheeler back into his treasure warehouse, their eyes turned to wonder.

"It's like that. Has the God of the Apostles returned?" the gatekeeper asks as he watches the figure of Kaori.

The soldiers were relieved to see Kaori. Perhaps they recognized her from the time they had brought Randzi back or when they went to recover the serene stones from the Guryuu-en Great Volcano.

It appears like the 4 wheeler had become known as Kaori's transport, and they named her the "God of the Apostles". Hajime didn't feel the need to correct them as they were not exactly wrong. Since they recognized Kaori the best, they put her out in front.

"Yes, we returned to try to purify the Oasis. Please pass this on to the lords…" Kaori began.

"Oasis! Is it true?" The gatekeeper responded.

“I’m only saying it’s possible…”

“Nevertheless, if it’s an apostle… and we apologize for the impoliteness in such a place. We’ve already sent a messenger. I cannot leave my post, but a lord should be coming immediately to escort you if you’d like to come to our waiting area.”

It seems they’ve gained recognition for previously rescuing the country. Hajime can see the respect in the eyes of the soldiers as they gaze at him. They were getting the VIP treatment. While cautiously watching the merchants that gave him curious looks, Hajime once again set foot into the Ankaji Dukedom.

The lord Randzi ran up breathlessly after about 15 minutes of waiting. It was pretty quick arrival. At least to Randzi, it looked like they were important.

“It’s been a while. I’m glad you’re all safe. I was worried when you did not come back after entrusting the serene stones to Tio-dono. It would have been troublesome if our savior had died before we could express our gratitude.”

“I’m just a mere adventurer. But well, I thank you. As you can see, your relief is safely received.”

“Oh, and we finished stockpiling the food with the assistance we

received. Along with the reservoir that Yue made, you've bought us sufficient time. The people won't go hungry thanks to you and the merchants."

Randzi gently laughed with slightly hollow cheeks. It seemed he had been run ragged to save Ankaji. The fatigue seemed to ooze out in his expressions. He wasn't getting enough time to rest.

"Lord. As for the purification of the oasis…" Kaori began.

"Apostle-dono… No, Kaori-dono. The Oasis is as usual. Thanks to the fresh groundwater, the purification is proceeding little by little. At least half a year and the oasis should be completely purified. One year before it soaks into the nearby soil and purifies it so that we can plant again." Randzi responds a little depressed.

Kaori explains that she might be able to immediately purify it. Randzi's response is dramatic. Taking a moment for it to sink in, "Seriously!?" Randzi spits out feverishly. Kaori shyly nods in verification while moving to hide behind Hajime, taken aback by his exuberance. The distraught Randzi corrects himself, then asks for the purification politely.

Since that was their intention anyway, Hajime nodded and Randzi led them to the oasis. The oasis is not very popular right now. In the past, it was a crowded place where people relaxed. Randzi was expressionless, but gave off a lonely atmosphere as he remembered the former oasis.

Kaori moves up to the shore of the oasis and begins to cast

reproduction magic.

Although Hajime had obtained the reproduction magic, as usual his aptitude for it was virtually nothing. However, in the case of Shea, it seems there is an automatic recovery effect, but it had to be activated consciously. Also, her physical and mental strength seem to recover far faster. Steadily, Shea is becoming even more superhuman. Along with her proficiency levels, body weight manipulation, and body strengthening, she has come to be like a heavy tank with automatic recovery installed.

The one with the most aptitude was Kaori, followed by Teo, and finally Yue. In the case of Yue, as usual, as a consequence of her own special auto-regeneration, this magic seems to have a poor recovery in comparison. On the other hand, for the healing Kaori, her high aptitude for recovery magic seems to lead to her having a strong grasp on “reproduction”, allowing her to use it more comprehensively and efficiently than anyone else. It’s a bit sad that Yue won’t be able to use it to improve her combat prowess.

Kaori’s begins to chant. It’s a long cast. It initially took her 7 minutes but after practicing she was able to bring it down to 3. Since it only took her a week to learn it, it was practically a cheat. However, since Yue was present it was hard to truly call her a cheat in comparison. Compared to Yue’s abilities, this seemed easy.

“—-Stopping elephant” she extends a white staff while closing her eyes and murmuring the final words.

In the next moment, a pale light resembling a firefly appeared, and then fell into the middle of the oasis. The entire oasis started to shine, and pale light particles began to bubble up to the surface

and float into the sky. It was a majestic scene that touched the heart. It truly felt like the corruption was being purged by heavenly light.

Everyone forgot to breathe as they admired the sight. Even after the mysterious glow covering the oasis floated away into the sky, Randzi stood without a word, immersing himself in the afterglow.

While supporting Kaori who was swaying a little from exhaustion, Hajime taps Randzi. Randzi snaps out of it and orders his men to survey the water quality. His subordinates hurry to examine the oasis with detection magic. After making a hard swallow, Randzi watches over his men, whom upon finishing their inspection report their results with expressions of disbelief.

"…. It's recovered." A subordinate mutters.

"Repeat that?" Randzi demands.

The subordinate adds words of confirmation and Randzi sucks in his breath, now knowing the truth.

"No abnormalities in the oasis! It is the original oasis! It has been completely cleaned!"

At that moment, Randzi and his subordinates cheered in unision. They threw whatever documents they had and abandoned whatever they were holding as they hugged each other and slapped

their backs, expressing their joy. Randzi also looked up at the heavens, exhaling deeply and wondering if this was a bit too easy.

“After that, soil regeneration. Lord, where were the crops you discarded?”

“… Well, it is all collected in one place. Because of all the time and labor, it was regrettable that we had to toss them… wait, you don’t mean…?”

“If Yue and Tio join, it should be possible…”

“…. Nn, no problem.”

“They were grown with effort, it’d be a shame to throw them away.” Hajime added.

As Randzi realized they might be able to not only recover the soil, but the lost crops as well, his hand went to his chest and he lowered his head deeply without hesitation. It was not something a lord should do, but that was the extent of his appreciation for their actions. The love for them was deep in this country. It was the kind of thing that transforms your sense of appreciation.

After receiving Randzi’s bow, Hajime tried to move them towards the farmland. However, he suddenly stopped when he felt a disturbance. A frenzied group of people were approaching in the distance. The soldiers of the Anjaki Dukedom were coming towards

them in a straight line with numerous soldiers of different attires. Using “far vision”, Hajime could see that the group was populated with Seikyo church officials and temple knights from this town.

As soon as they approached Hajime’s group, they immediately surrounded them in a semicircular shape. An elderly man in white regal robes of the temple knights stepped forward. The dangerous atmosphere between the man and Hajime was only divided by the presence of Randzi.

“See them, they are dangerous.”

“Foribin Bishop, what the hell is this? They are dangerous? This hero has saved out dukedom twice already. I will not ignore disrespect to them as a lord of Ankaji.”

“The elderly man who was called Forbin Bishop snorted a laugh at Randzi’s words.

“Hmph, hero? Hold your tongue. They are already accredited heretics. Careless words will come crashing down around you!” the Bishop snarled.

“They’re branded heretics? Ridiculous, I have not heard of this.”

Randzi was shocked at the word heretic being attached to Hajime. Randzi was a follower of the church though. He was aware of the weight of those words. Did they make a mistake? He met the

Bishop with disbelief.

“Of course you wouldn’t know, the news just arrived this morning. And the heretic showing up right now, don’t you think that’s exquisite timing? Surely this was a message from God. Destroy the enemies of God… now on to Center…”

Hajime couldn’t hear the voices of the last lines, but apparently Hajime has been branded a heretic. Randzi and the Bishop eye him unintentionally.

Hajime seems neither shocked nor in any particular hurry, only offering a shrug as if to ask “What was I supposed to do?” to Randzi.

Randzi wrinkled his eyebrows after seeing Hajime’s response. However, the bishop opens his mouth and openly laughs.

“And now, I have to subdue the enemies of God. They say this man is quite brutal, but I have a hundred temple knights behind me. Come with us quietly so we don’t upset the public peace, and we won’t make things more difficult for you.

Randzi closes his eyes. Without any more information, he could guess why Hajime was branded a heretic considering his power and his personality. Hajime was a force the church couldn’t manage and thus couldn’t allow.

However, given the strength of Hajime's companions, stopping them was a decision equal to suicide. Randzi doubted the sanity of picking a war with Hajime. He was wondering if they had their priorities straight.

It is a fact that Hajime saved Ankaji. He healed the people who were fallen by poison, prepared the water that was their lifeline, subdued the monster lurking in the oasis, and further purified the oasis back to how it was before.

To this huge debt, it was troubling considering what they could provide as an award. Randzi's eyes grew wide at the realization that an opportunity just presented itself. And, with a serving lord's dignity, Randzi broke the silence and provided the impatient Bishop an answer.

"Rejected."

"… I'm sorry, what?"

To the totally unexpected words, the Forubin bishop provided an interesting goofy expression. The appearance of the bishop, inwardly, put a wry smile on Randzi. It should have been impossible for Randzi to go against the decision of the Seikyo church. Randzi repeated the words with unexpected determination.

"I said I refuse. These heros are our national salvation. If you would make them an enemy, then I cannot forgive the Seikyo church."

“Are… you… insane? You cannot go against the church. Do you want to be branded as a heretic as well?”

In response to Randzi’s words, the bishop raised a startled cry clogged with anger. The temple knights also looked at each other with puzzled looks.

“Bishop, does Central not know their accomplishments? He saved the dukedom when we were attacked by a deadly poison. Your reports should also mention that he rescued Ur town, don’t they? I don’t understand the sanity of this heretic claim. Reconsider the heresy on account of these new facts.”

“Silence! The decision is final! This is God’s will! That is unforgivable. If you continue to protect this heretic, then Ankaji itself will be branded. Take heed!”

The bishop’s pupils had the light of mania in them. The way he was screaming gave an atmosphere that did not seem very clergy-like. Randzi stared at him with a cold eye. Hajime had come up beside him with an imperceptible motion and asked with a surprised look.

“Are you sure about this? Both the Kingdom and the Church are going to retaliate. As a lord, will you be alright?”

Randzi does not answer Hajime. Instead, he turns Hajime’s gaze to the surrounding men, who gave off an aura of preparedness and acceptance. Their eyes shown with death as if saying “to die killing

is the way to go.” It was that kind of expression.

The bishop also seemed to read the change in mood and shouts out a last warning while his face reddened and became more frenzied.

“Is this your answer? Public, your way ends here. Well, your way is not. This is the end for anyone who gets in my way. You’ll receive God’s divine punishment and fall to ruin!”

“This is Ankaji, we’re not so shameless as to sell a hero who saved us. Divine? Like I’d believe God’s judgement would be so shameless. I guess my faith differs from the Bishop’s God.”

The Bishop’s word became expressionless afer the angry words from Randzi. He raised one hand to try to send a signal for the Temple Knights to attack.

At this time, there was a thump! Something flew at the knights and struck one of their helmets with a clang. At their feet was a pebble. It didn’t do any damage to the Knight, but why was it there? Such questions were fleeting as another stone was thrown, bumping noisily against the temple knight’s armor.

If you looked where the stone’s came from, many of the inhabitants of Ankaji had gathered in the intervening time, surrounding the Templar knights.

They had come in response to the mysterious lights that had

previously come from the Oasis and came upon the scene of the temple knights surrounding their lord and Hajime.

They remembered the treatments they had the received from Kaori as “God of the Apostle”, the serene stones, and the magic bullet challenging the labyrinth to save them. They were indignant at the behavior of the church which turned into hostility as they began to throw stones.

“Stop! People of Ankaji! They are God’s enemy. Heretics! You are going against the will of God!”

Forubin is shouting loudly, trying to solve the excited inhabitant’s misunderstanding. They just didn’t know that Hajime was labeled a heretic and will relax once the bishop explains things to them, or so the bishop thought.

In fact, the words of Seikyo church bishop caused the inhabitants to stop throwing stones and look at each other in confusion.

This time, Randzi spoke out with dignity.

“My beloved people, Listen! I was just informed that the oasis was purified. Our oasis has been returned to us through Hajime’s efforts. As well as the contaminated land. And the crops. They used their purification to return our Ankaji back to the way it way. They also brought me back to Ankaji. Make your decision with your own mind. Keep our hero of national salvation, or turn on him. I decided to keep him!”

The Bishop tried to mock Randzi's speech, "in such empty words, there is no reason to go against the majesty of the church," however, his smile of ridicule slowly dropped.

The inhabitant's intention is shown in the form of stoning.

"and I, a…." The bishops words were sounded out by the slams of stones hitting armor.

"You act playfully, this is a matter of life or death!"

"The church did not do anything. Yet your insanity makes you want to harm the apostle who helped us!"

"What's a heretic anyway? You're abusing the term!"

"It must have been heretics that authorized this!"

"Defend Kaori!"

"Long live the lord!"

"Kaori, I dedicate myself to you!"

“Let’s start a Kaori fan club!”

Apparently, the inhabitants seemed to have a sense of deep love and respect for Rindzi and Kaori. Pushing aside the faith, they defended Rindzi and Kaori with all of their spirit. No, it’s more like they changed their faith itself. However, it seems like they have a faith of their own, belief that no one will harm Kaori who saved them as the “God of the Apostles”. In short, it was a faith that exceeded the confidence of the bishop. It wasn’t known where that trust was to begin with.

Residents gathered one after another. The people’s forces are not at all inferior to the Temple Knights, but the bishop became a beacon of anger and hostility that raged endlessly. The Temple Knights started to back up in retreat.

“Bishop-dono, these are the intentions of Ankaji. What of your previous allegations?”

“It’s not as simple as you think…”

The Bishop turned his heel while grinding his teeth, a scowl leveled at Hajime. The knights rapidly move to follow after him. The bishop seemed to lose steam, giving off the last of his passion with loud footsteps as he headed back to the church.

“Is this really okay? Will they leave it at this?”

Hajime had a concerned look, having been left out of the loop until the end. Kaori's direct involvement with the crisis with the church left a worried look on her face.

Despite this, Randzi replied with a cool look like it was no big deal.

"This is the choice of Ankaji. The people who live in this dukedom are grateful to you. It's unthinkable to have you die in our territory that is why they would have killed to protect you. I don't want such a coup in this country."

"That aside, I wouldn't be hurt by someone of their level…" Hajime responded scratching his cheek.

Randzi laughed at his words.

"If that's so, then that means you guys are scarier than the church. Being the nation's hero is only half the reason we protected you. We also don't want to become your enemies. I can't even imagine the amount of magic you possess to slaughter an unknown monster in a breeze and capture a large labyrinth in just a few days. You ignore the church and don't respond to the threat of a hundred knights either. You've defeated an army of ten thousand and there are even rumors you defeated a demon instantly. No, it's downright scary. There will be a time when I succeed after my father passes, but I'll take pride in having made a wise decision between the two."

So Randzi had no intention of catering to the church's hostility towards Hajime. He put the church and Hajime on a scale of who was a stronger ally and chose the latter. Indeed, it could be said the country itself would act against the majesty of the church. To say this was a bold decision would not be an exaggeration.

Hajime smiled at the thought that his confrontation with the church was thwarted by the people themselves. As the people moved around them in a fluster with care for their safety, Kaori laughed happily. Hajime realized this was the path Aiko had hoped for him, one that was not a "lonely way of life."

Three days after the turmoil from the church.

Hajime's party had finished purifying the agricultural areas, and he was watching the oasis shine from a hilltop.

Hajime could see the sparkling surface of the water. People had gathered around the oasis once again with liveliness and smiles. Couples sat in the grass watching the kids frolic in the water. There were people pier fishing, and lovers in their own little worlds on boats. People had returned to the oasis, and they all had smiles.

This is how Hajime passed this day in Ankaji. He had intended to leave as soon as he had bought some of the specialty fruit, but he had been kept there by the lord and the inhabitants' generosity and ended up staying a few extra days.

Hajime worried that with the current mood in the city, their departure from Akanji would be met with a parade. He had to make a request to Randzi to keep things modest. They were able to finish their send-off at the lord's mansion, and finally Hajime made it to the gates, taking one last look at the oasis before they left.

"You stand out, perhaps you can wear something a little less conspicuous."

Hajime mentions to Yue nearby as he turns to leave.

"It does…? Tired of?"

"What? Is that so? Hajime-kun."

"Well, Yue, Kaori. From my view, you guys just stand out."

"Well, I – it's because this dress is not to pass through the gates…"

Shea had said these outfits where part of the so-called belly dance costume. Their navels were visible between a high top and short pants. It was very sensational, their tiny navels dazzling. It guaranteed that every eye would be on the one wearing it.

It seems like a common way of dressing in Ankaji. When Yue

received the gift from a lady of the manor, she immediately began wearing it to show off. Upon seeing Yue in it, Hajime's eyes became like a wild beasts. Apparently, Hajime seems to be weak to that kind of costume. His eyes were glued to Kaori once she started wearing it, prompting Shea and Tio to do the same.

Other than with Yue, they didn't elicit enough response from Hajime. As a result, they started wearing the outfits all day. However, Yue's outfit collapsed all reason in Hajime.

Even now as the set out, everyone remains in their erotic costumes. Finally, Hajime had reached his wits end and started to poke the point loudly and aggressively, despite being somewhat happy, to make them dress normal once again.

_____

It's been two days since leaving Ankaji.

They were on the road leading to Horuado. Hajime's four wheeler steadily approached a caravan that was being attacked by Rashiki thieves.

It was at this point that Hajime and Kaori would meet a surprising person.

Chapter 98

It was Shia who first noticed the commotion.

“Isn’t that someone being attacked ahead?”

As usual, Yue was pressed up against Hajime. Kaori tried to get between them, the aura of her dragon pressed up against Yue’s lightning aura. The result was that Hajime had to be careful driving and thus didn’t have his attention on what was in front of him.

As Shia said, there appeared to be a caravan ahead with two groups, one attacking the other. As their vehicle approached, Hajime’s “distance vision” allowed him to see two groups in the middle of a battle, one offending and the other defending. Shea’s usamimis picked up the roar of battle before Hajime could see them.

“They appear to be bandits. The bandits seem to outnumber the caravan guards over 40 to just 15. The difference in their combat potential is clear.” Hajime describes the situation to Yue and Kaori.

“… Nn, the guards are putting up a good fight,” Yue adds.

“They have a barrier spell surrounding the caravan, but it’s not going to hold out. The bandits are trying to break the wall with

magic.”

“But their defense is holding for the moment.”

“Having a barrier cover the entire caravan stretches it pretty thin. It will not endure long. They’ve bought themselves some time, but it won’t hold.”

It appears like the caravan faced a surprise attack. Numerous people within the barrier were crouched down with injuries, or worse dead. They had managed to take out a few bandits, but the bandits were still proportionally more. They had managed to erect a barrier, but once it failed the people of the caravan would undoubtedly meet a gruesome end.

Hajime’s conversation was cut short as the barrier melted to nothingness. The bandits raised a shout and surged forward, breaking through the caravan’s remaining defenses with vicious grins on their faces. The escort squadron fought back desperately, but they were outgunned. One person after another fell to injuries from the bandits.

Kaori had a determined expression on her face, she turned to Hajime and requested he help rescue them in a tone that suggested she was agitated.

“Hajime-kun, please! Help them, if you can…”

Hajime didn't respond, but accelerated his 4 wheeler instead. Since it was obvious the caravan would be wiped out if he didn't help, he had already decided he wanted to know their story. He wanted to say that to Kaori, but didn't.

The 4 wheeler chewed into the ground producing a "garri garri garri" sound as he accelerated with a vengeance, the car moving as if it was attached to a rocket engine.

"Hajime-kun, thank you…"

Kaori smiled happily as he began to take action. Hajime shrugged in response. Hajime was simply doing what he wanted to do. Yue tightened her seatbelt.

"Oh, that, Hajime-kun? Isn't this a bit…"

The feeling seemed to be ruined as the four wheeler continued to accelerate moment by moment. Although she asked him to help, she knew how cars worked on earth, and the speed he was charging at them didn't leave time to stop. Was he going to ram them with the 4 wheeler? Kaori could not help but think so.

With Kaori's concerned look, Hajime responded."Don't they teach you to stomp the accelerator when you see a criminal in driving school?"

"Of course they wouldn't teach that. Don't twist the traffic laws to

your discretion. Hey, Yue, don't agree with him, stop nodding!"

While Kaori tsukkomi'd, Hajime ignored her, turning the vehicle towards a bandit sitting in the rear who appeared to be the leader. Hajime intended to kill the bandits by running them over without hesitation.

The bandit leader finally noticed the strange object approaching them leaving behind a cloud of dust. He issued instructions to nearby bandits, and they began to chant magic. To them, the 4 wheeler appeared to be some new kind of demon or monster. They would not have believed it was man-made, let alone operated by people.

Hajime poured magical power in to the 4 wheeler, operating one of its many functions. A blade of approximately 1 meter protruded from the sides and roof. The bandits fired flame bullets at the vehicle, but they bounced harmlessly off the 4 wheeler, so Hajime chose to ignore them and kept driving forward. Even though the flame bullets were striking the vehicle, its steadfast rush towards the bandits put sour expressions on their faces.

Dogoo! Baki! Squish!

Horror, despair, and embarrassment – those were the expressions on the bandit's faces as they collided with the hood of the 4-wheeler.

As bandits flung over the roof, the blade on top ripped them to shreds. Some tried to jump to the sides to avoid the blades and

were blown away instead. At 80 km/h, anyone who was lucky enough to miss the blades ended up with shattered bones and ruptured organs.

The rear group of bandits were wiped out in a moment, leaving seven dead.

After taking out the rear bandits, Hajime spun the car, putting it into a drift. The area became a slaughtering ground as the 4 wheeler cut into the bandits, leaving the surviving members of the caravan staring with stunned looks. Bandits and caravan guards in close combat suddenly stopped to stare at the scene.

As the bandits and caravan guards eye them cautiously, Hajime turned to Kaori as she leaned forward eagerly.

“If they attack us without compassion, we must be willing to do the same. Do you understand?” Hajime explained to Kaori.

“… yes, I understand.”

Kaori understood that despite being kind, she wasn’t allowed to heal or protect the people she would call enemies. If she did, she wouldn’t be able to follow Hajime. She had made her resolve to be in his party. Hajime feared that Kaori would get in his way, but she gave him a resolute nod to alleviate his suspicions.

“I won’t interfere. So do what you need to do.” Hajime sighed.

“Yes.” Kaori let out a smile, getting out of the 4 wheeler and racing to the closest injured person. She was surprised when it turned out to be a young woman. The bandits who had regained their resolved immediately approached Kaori aggressively, their faces twisted in anger over the bandits the 4 wheeler had killed.

“You whore! Die!” one of the bandits brandished his long sword while raising an angry voice.

Kaori spared him a sideways glance and then brushed past while ignoring him. She continued at a full sprint towards the injured person while beginning her chant. A moment later there was a loud bang, and man’s head exploded, easily ending his life.

Dopan! Dopan! Dopan! Dopan! Dopan! Dopan!

The wind continuously carried the sounds of death with each crack of thunder. Each explosion resulted in the destruction of another head in a spectacle of blood. It was overwhelmingly harsh. The more than 40 bandits were reduced to half their number in a matter of seconds.

In a panic at the unbelievable sight, a few of the bandits tried to grab Shia and the other girls in an attempt to gain a hostage. One of the guards tried to shout out to the girls to give them a warning, but his worries were pointless. Shia’s superhuman growth was progressing quite nicely, and there were no openings in this combat rabbit!

Shia pulled out Doryukken from the treasure room, which appeared to the bandits like nothingness behind her. Passi! It made a satisfying sound as she swung it, the hammer stretching to size. As she swung, a circular white membrane formed on end. It was a wall of air which struck the upper bodies of three of the bandits, blowing them away in a single hit.

“Oops! Too much blood!”

Apparently, as they hadn’t fought any small fries in a while, Shia had forgotten to restrain herself when fighting a weaker enemy. She had intended to just toss the enemy back, but with her absent-minded spirit, she had sent their upper bodies flying without the lower. The sudden splattering of blood causes Shia to back up several steps in surprise.

Yue and Tio spared Shia amazed looks, even though they were in the middle of decimating the other bandits with a storm of magic.

The remaining 10 bandits were unceremoniously shot by Hajime, death immediately following without time to plead for their lives. It was pure destruction without any forgiveness.

Kaori used the recovery magic restoration to heal numerous people at once scattered across the caravan. Regrettably, many of the caravan guards who had fallen earlier had already breathed their last breath. Even reproduction magic could not help bring them back from the dead.

As Hajime approached Kaori, a person raced up to her quickly. The

stranger was small-statured, their face hidden with a hood, causing them to appear suspicious. However, Hajime knew this was the person who had kept the barrier up to desperately protect the caravan. None of the caravan guards got in Hajime's way as he approached them.

"Kaori!"

The hooded person threw out her hands and used her momentum to leap at Kaori while calling her name in a pretty voice. Kaori didn't hide her astonishment, muttering the name of the person in the process.

"Lily (She'll be called Riri or Ririana in the next chapter on)? After all, it is Lily? That barrier looked familiar. I didn't think I'd find you in such a place, but I suspected…" It appeared Kaori recognized the hooded person as Lily.

—— Rather, Liliana S.B. Heilig (Hairihi), the third princess of the Heilig (Hairihi) Kingdom was the person in the hood.

Liliana hugged Kaori with relief, offering a glimpse of her big, blue eyes and apparent beauty hidden by the hood. Her eyes squeezed shut as she began to cry, speaking to Kaori quietly between sobs.

"I also did not think I'd find Kaori in this place. It is… good fortune. It seems that I haven't exhausted my luck yet."

“Lily? What’s wrong?”

Kaori didn’t quite get the meaning of Liliana’s words, but she noticed something was off and pulled back. Liliana put a finger on Kaori’s mouth, urging her not to use Liliana’s name.

Apparently Liliana was alone and had managed to slip into the caravan to get this far. Kaori gave a sympathetic look as she tried to emphasize with the struggle the princess must have faced.

“Kaori, are you guys done?” Hajime interrupted, oblivious to the mood.

Liliana gave Hajime a blank look. Suddenly, Liliana raised her voice and shouted “Hya!” Looking up at Hajime from within her hood, a light bulb seemed to go off in her head and she immediately began to greet Hajime.

“It’s Nagumo, isn’t it? Long time no see. We had heard about your survival after the fall. The strength and ability to survive is worthy of respect. It was good you survived. While you were missing, Kaori was a wreck.”

“Wait, Lily, we’re fine now.” Kaori spoke in a fluster.

“I heard about how Kaori confessed to Hajime from Shizuku, but you’ll have to tell me more about it later.”

Liliana was teasing Kaori in a fun tone, smiling from the back of her hood. Kaori turned bright red from embarrassment.

The princess's smile must be very popular with the public. There was no doubt that if she aimed it at the young and old alike, they would fall for her. However, Hajime wasn't particularly moved by her smile.

Without reading the atmosphere at all, he eyed her suspiciously and demands,"…And who exactly are you?"

"Heh?"

If Hajime didn't interrupt them, Liliana and Kaori would undoubtedly keep talking about the status of all the other students in the kingdom. Hajime didn't have the patience to be subtle. He wanted a direct answers.

Liliana was a princess with a great personality and who was loved by everyone she met. She was shocked to be addressed so improperly by a man who normally wouldn't even be worthy of meeting the princess, thus she let out a goofy voice involuntarily.

The panicked Kaori immediately tried to smooth out the situation on behalf of the dazed Liliana. She spoke in a low voice so no one else could hear them.

“Hajime you… Princess! It’s the Princess! It’s the Heilig Kingdom Princess Leliana that you’re speaking to!”

“…….. Ah…”

“Gusu (sobbing), you’ve forgotten me, haven’t you? Gusu.” Leliana whined.

“Lily! Don’t cry because of that! Hajime-kun is kinda whatchamacallit. He’s special. No one normal would forget Lily. So you don’t need to cry!” Kaori attempted to smooth things out.

“Hey, can you not say those rude things so casually?” Hajime sighed.

Since Liliana’s watery eyes looked quite terrible, Kaori was desperate to comfort her. Hajime involuntarily tsukkomi’d, however Kaori gave him a dirt look that said “be quiet right now!” Meanwhile, Liliana was explaining “No, it’s okay Kaori, it just hurt my pride a little…” Across the board, the conclusion from the conversation seemed to be that Hajime was wrong for having completely forgotten who Liliana was.

With the atmosphere already delicate, a man from the caravan approached them.

“It’s been a long time…. It looks like you’re in good health…” the caravan leader stated.

“From health drinks…” Hajime responds

“Really? A health drink? A company that can make that must be a famous and wealthy company. Can you give me their name?”

“Oh-, no, nevermind. But how are you, Mottou?”

“Yeah, I’m glad you remember Mottou from the Yunker trading company. This is the second time you helped us out of a dangerous place. It looks like we were fated to meet again.” The man laughed and shook Hajime’s hand.

It seemed like the leader of the caravan was the man they escorted to Fhu-ren from Brook town some time ago.

Hajime also remembered when his commercial spirit got the better of him and Hajime had to put him in his place. Hajime had learned a bit about human nature from the man named Mottou. Although it seemed like Mottou’s commercial spirit hadn’t declined in the slightest. He casually touched Hajime’s ring of storage as he let go of his hand. His eye’s weren’t laughing, but seemed to ask “Are you sure you’re not going to sell that soon?” Maybe it was just Hajime’s imagination.

Shia explained to Kaori and Lily their relationship with Mottou.

“A random person you met only once you can remember, but a princess?” Lily became even more depressed and Kaori struggled to comfort her in spite of the story she just heard.

As Mottou told it, they were heading to the Ankaji dukedom via Horuado. The plight of Ankaji had already been known, and as a merchant he was ready to head out there to earn a profit. It seemed that he had already been out there once and this was his second journey after a stop in the Imperial City. From the look on his face, it was clear they were making big profits.

Hajime explained that they were heading for the Sea of Trees after a stop in Huruado. Mottou begged them for an escort until they reached Horuado.

However, before Hajime could answer, Liliana put it a stop to it.

“I’m sorry for interrupting you, Merchant. I must speak with you for a moment. Thank you for transporting me this far. I’m sorry for my selfish request, but I won’t be joining you the rest of the way to Horuado.”

“Oh, you’re not heading to Horuado anymore?”

“Yes, this point is fine. I will, of course, pay for the entire trip.”

It seemed that Liliana was taking advantage of the caravan to make it to Horuado. Having met Hajime on the way, she no longer felt it

was necessary. At the point, Hajime received a tap on his shoulder and Kaori whispered in his ear.

“Don’t be cruel to Lily anymore!” she gave a silent plea with her eyes.

“Is that so? Well, it’s been a pleasure. Don’t worry about the money.” Mottou continued.

“Huh? No… why?”

Mottou had refused to receive money, which confused Liliana. The caravan had provided bed and food along with an escort. Coming from Mottou the merchant, those words seemed completely unexpected. Liliana gave Mottou a troubled smile.

“Don’t trouble yourself too much on it. But here’s some advice. Typically, a caravan will charge extra passengers before they depart. To not have to pay before you leave typically suggests they’re up to something, or don’t plan to charge you in the first place. This is the latter.”

“Is that so…”

“I don’t know what your circumstances are, but since you’re traveling alone I assumed it was serious. During a crisis, if a merchant such as myself helps, then in the future the people of this country may find confidence with this merchant.”

Liliana realized that Mottou knew her identity from the beginning. He pretended not to know her so he could help without drawing attention.

“Then at least I should offer a token of my appreciation. Without your help, I never would have made it out of the Imperial City.”

“Heh… the thing you want most is often the most difficult purchase for a merchant, you know?”

“Eh?…. No, I don’t know.” Liliana responded confused.

“It’s trust.” Mottou explained.

“Trust?”

“Yes, a business without trust can’t thrive and never will makea profit. However, to help a young lady out in a serious situation, the Yunker Trading Company might become known as a company you can trust. Your fare will be paid no matter.”

Liliana held a wry smile at the words he spoke. If you use money unreasonably, it’s synonymous with a lack of trust. There were some contrary feelings welling up in Liliana. Eventually, she gave up on them and took Mottou’s good will straight on.

“Your trading company is truly worthy of relying on. This Heilig princess will never forget your kindness and dedication. Thank you!”

“Your words are wasted on this one.” Mottou bowed deeply with respect.

Then Mottou turned, leaving Liliana and Hajime on the spot as his caravan headed down the planned route to Horuado. He left in a manner of knowing that he’d receive his own heretic certification for aiding the princess. He had already received the information that the Ankaji dukedom had recovered thanks to Hajime. Hajime could only guess why he chose to help in this manner. He supposed Mottou would say he did It to “Earn favor for a better tomorrow”, the slogan of a genuine merchant. (Translation note: It’s implied that he never had planned to go to Ankaji, and had done it purely to help the princess, in order to get in good with the royal family, so to speak)

After Mottou had left, the remaining party headed off in the magic four wheeler while Liliana began to explain her story. Liliana’s expression was full of tension and impatience which gave Hajime a foreboding feeling. Finally, she began to speak.

“Aiko was kidnapped…”

Hajime sensed that there was more to it than that.

To summarize Liliana’s story:

Recently, the mood inside the Royal Palace seemed more uncomfortable than Liliana remembered.

The King committed himself to the Seikyo church more fervently than he had ever done in the past. The Prime minister and the other leaders also seemed to get caught up in his fervor, their belief strengthening unreasonably.

If it was just that… but there was also the fact that one after another, everyone seemed to fall in line with the church. Their collaboration was enhanced like never before. Leliana kept telling herself it was her imagination.

The discomfort didn't stop there. Everyone seemed oddly devoid of any ambition. She had attempted to talk with knights and soldier she knew, familiar faces, and they all responded properly, but their responses seemed mechanical. Maybe even something like an illness.

She even tried to consult with Meld, the one knight she had the most trust in, but he always was kept out of sight and busy. Liliana couldn't manage to catch him even once to talk.

Meanwhile, Aiko finally returned to the Imperial City with details on Ur town. Liliana seemed to have been present at the time. Suddenly, an abnormal demand was made. It was the call to make Hajime a heretic. Credited with saving Ur, the objections and opinions of Aiko, who boasted great name recognition and popularity as the "fertility goddess", were completely ignored.

The conclusion seemed unreasonable, and Liliana had been a fierce protestor, although her father didn't budge no matter what she said. His stubbornness seemed to border on obsession. Instead, Liliana herself was accused of having a lack of faith, and her father started to see her as an enemy, rather than a daughter.

Liliana pretended that they had convinced her, and then immediately made plans to run away. She wanted to discuss what was going on with Aiko first. Liliana knew that Aiko was planning to meet the rest of the students to discuss the events around Hajime fall at dinner, so she wanted to meet her beforehand and discuss her fears.

She had been approaching Aiko's room when she heard her arguing with another woman in the corridor. When she peeped around the corner, she saw Aiko unconscious and in the hands of a woman with silver hair wearing a church frock.

The woman made Liliana afraid, and she immediately dashed into a nearby hidden passage only known to the royal family.

Although the silver-haired woman had noticed and looked for her, she didn't notice the hidden passage itself and left Liliana in peace. Liliana was convinced that the silver haired woman was the mastermind behind all of this. That everything was connected and that she needed to tell someone.

However, since Aiko was ambushed, it stood to reason that the students were being watched. She also didn't know Meld's whereabouts. Then she remembered that one of the students, a

dependable friend, wasn't in the capital. So she decided she had to find Kaori. She had heard the story that Kaori was with Nagumo Hajime. That means it wouldn't be just the two of them she could rely on. She escaped in a hidden passage way with the plan to head to the Ankaji dukedom.

Based on the news that Ankaji was recovering after a public emergency, in seemed like there was a high probability the person responsible was Hajime and company.

"And after that, you know, I was allowed to travel with the caravan of the Yunker Trading Company. I did not think I'd get noticed, let alone find myself getting attacked by bandits, or that I'd be helped by Kaori… not even in my dreams… a little while ago did not… but… I… it was scary… the church… What is happening? The nun with that silver hair… my father…"

Liliana hugged her body, trembling with fear. Rather than the talented princess she usually was, she just looked like a scared girl. Although that was no wonder. All the people she knew were turned into strangers, and she was afraid she'd be next.

Kaori hugged her tightly, trying to ease the fear that dug into Liliana's mind even a little.

While watching the scene, Hajime went through the events in his mind. Lilliana's story reminded him of the Merujine underwater ruins and the scene they had been shown in the end. The people had been built into a fervor with their belief in god. This was very truly a dangerous situation.

He didn't know if those visions were true. Could it be happening? No, rather they should get the god level magic quickly, and leave this world as soon as possible.

However, Hajime couldn't make the decision immediately, as he had to consider Aiko-sensei. Most likely, what Aiko was going to tell the students was true about their being brought to this world to fight for the god's amusement. They liked to use people as pawns, and her words would have put a wedge of suspicion that would have inconvenienced them. It seems Hajime's theory was spot on.

For them to decide to kidnap Aiko, it must have been Hajime's fault. They probably don't want to kill her, but the people who take pleasure in manipulating everyone like a hand puppet might decide to eventually make use of her.

Hajime was indebted to Aiko for the advice that she gave him. It's not as bad now that he is not alone.

For that reason…

"We're going to help my teacher."

Hajime chose to save, rather than abandon the one that needed him.

With those words, Liliana raised her face in hope. She wore an expression of relief over the fact that he'd come back with her to

the city. She had heard that he was indifferent towards his classmates in this world and she had feared he would have abandoned them. She expected that convincing him to go would be difficult.

“You really will?”

Liliana asked for confirmation, but Hajime only shrugged.

“Please do not misunderstand. It’s not because of your kingdom. It’s for my teacher. She’s been kidnapped because of me. I have to take responsibility.”

“For Aiko…”

Liliana was a little discouraged when she realized that Hajime had no plans to lend his force to the kingdom, but she had some hope that he’d change his mind on the way. Despite his harsh words, she still broke into an involuntary smile.

“Well, in the process of helping my teacher, I might end up aiding the kingdom by accident.” He admitted.

“…. Fufu, I hope that is the case. I thank you, Nagumo.”

Since the woman who had kidnapped Aiko was wearing a frock of the church, and since the king was listening to the church to an

abnormal degree, likely the church was the cause of all these problems. The church would likely get in Hajime's way, and they'd end up as his enemy. Helping Aiko and the fixing the kingdom seemed to be one and the same. By helping Aiko, Hajime would help Liliana.

Liliana shared a smile with Kaori, causing Hajime's mouth to distort a bit.

In addition to saving Aiko, Hajime had another purpose. It's the Kojiri (Spirit) magic in Kamiyama. From what they had heard from Miledi (armor-possessed prankster who gave them gravity magic), Kamiyama is also one of the seven major labyrinths. However, whether there is a large labyrinth entrance hidden by the church, Hajime had no clue. It was still worth a check although the church officials would likely get in his way.

So even though he had originally planned on going to the Sea of Trees, he now had a good reason to go for Kamiyama. And, in the process he'd rescue Aiko, with the likelihood of a fight with church very high. If he attacked the head temple, maybe that's all he'd need to get the Kojiro (Spirit) magic, or so he thought.

With regards to the silver-haired woman, Hajime mentioned that he thought he had seen a silver haired person in the visions given to them in the Meljeene Underwater Ruins. On the luxury liner, there was a woman in a hood who disappeared and they most certainly had silver hair. Hajime couldn't guess if it was the same person, the age was too different. However, there was a feeling from the beginning. Something to do with this woman with silver hair.

Hajime's fighting spirit burned. He would stop them, no matter who the other party was. He'll kill anyone who gets in his way. He puts on a ferocious smile like that of a wild wolf.

"…. Hajime, nice." Yue responded to his look.

"Hajime… your face looks a little tight…"

"Thank you for showing me such a vicious look. You're making me wet!" Tio added.

The atmosphere between Hajime in the girls was anything but subtle, Liliana blushed at the sight.

Chapter 99 - The Apostle's Raid, and The Kings Capital is Invaded

This is not meant to be a perfect translation, I cannot read japanese characters and this was carefully edited based on translations I got from my Machine Translator. Therefore, there are bound to be errors here and there! At best, this could be considered as an unedited Final Draft towards an Official Translation

In a room where the only light source was produced by the moonlight rays, causing a contrast of black and white from the narrow grate window.

A simple and plain room can be seen. It's only around 6 tatami mats in size with a small desk, chair, wooden bed, and a simple toilet. If compared to Earth's prison cells, it's obvious that this is much worst.

In such a bad prison, sitting on the bed in the corner, is Hatanaka Aiko who is currently burying her face in her knees.

It's been 3 days since Aiko was brought to this room.

Due to the bracelet artifact worn on her wrist, Aiko could not use magic. Still, though she tried to escape at first, as expected, it wasn't possible to pry open a steel door with her physical strength alone, moreover, the opening of the grate window is only big

enough for one of her arms to just barely pass through.

Even then, the current rooms position is at the very top of an expensive temple, it is the [Kamiyama]*God's Mountain* temple, even though it should be impossible to reach the ground safely, there are members of the church standing on watch.

In such a position, while worrying about her students safety, Aiko who cannot do anything is dejected and gloomy, Her already small body stature becomes even smaller on the bed.

[.....I need to get to my students…...but how……]

Aiko while looking up muttered slightly, she remembered what the nun with the silver hair had said to her as she was kidnaped. Aiko's thoughts, if what she heard from Hajime would become an inconvenience when told to Kouki and them, it's obvious who the "master" that she spoke of is. And it appears that they've taken interest in a student as well.

Aiko's mind became filled with unspeakable uneasiness. Recalling, the events of Ulu*Town where Hajime's group repelled the demon army*, where one of her students lost their life, Yukitoshi Shimizu. Possibly, again, another student will…., with these thoughts in her mind Aiko became more anxious.

Being confined in this open room, she tried to think about things that she could currently do. If she settled down and look back calmly, the royal palace felt too unnatural and covered with a thick sense of incongruity. In Aiko's mind, with a strong posture, she

remembered the dangerous atmosphere that King Erihido and other leaders carried.

Surely, Aiko began to guess that the nun with silver hair had done something. She definitely said, “charm” if that was true then, surely, something along the lines of brainwashing was done.

However, at the same time, when talking with Shizuku and Ririana, such odd sense of incongruity was not there. Though becoming relieved about that, there is still a strong uneasiness built up in her chest due to being confined.

While praying for their safety, another concern was remembered. it was the words, “elimination of the irregular.” Those words were she heard just before completely losing consciousness, for some reason Aiko recalled a certain student.

The person that she owes her life to, the student that killed Yukitoshi Shimizu. While holding strong will and overpowering strength, the boy who thought seriously and listen to Aiko’s words. And, a lot of things happened, a various amount of things, deep inside, as expected deep inside, though she shouldn’t think about it, but she still ended up remembering.

The memory that she desperately tried to seal in her mind, is once again remembered, for some reason her cheeks become hot. Though Aiko was shaking her head to clear her mind of it, she begins to worry about Hajime’s safety, and carelessly muttered his name.

[……Nagumo-kun]

[Ou? what, sensei?]

[Fe!?]

From the sudden answer to her unconscious mumbling, she instinctively let out a unexpected voice. There shouldn't be anyone else in the room, while looking throughout the room, Aiko inclining her head, [Was it a hallucination?] she said. However, Aiko was definitely not hallucinating, again, she heard the voice.

[Over here, sensei]

[Eh?]

Aiko's body became alerted to the voice, it wasn't a hallucination after all! Her gaze peered towards the narrow grate window. There, it was the appearance of Hajime that was peeping through from the otherside.

[Eh? Eh? Nagumo-kun? Eh? This is the top floor….of this temple….eh?]

[Ah~, yes. First of all, calm down sensei. Im almost done confirming for traps……]

Disregarding Aiko's confused stare, Hajime confirms whether there are any traps with his Magic Eye, then "Transmuting" was used and bright red sparks appeared, a hole big enough for one person to pass through was made and with that the invasion was complete.

The room Aiko is confined in is about 100 meters above ground level. However, he entered as if he was on solid ground! That is to say, for Hajime to casually opened a hole and walked right in, caused Aiko to stare in shock.

Hajime shows a small smile towards the amazed Aiko.

[What, is it really that surprising. Didn't you notice that I was coming? Though I should have already cut off all traces of my presence……I've lost a bit of my confidence now]

[He? Noticed? Eh?]

[No, because, you call out my name. Didn't you sense me outside the window?]

Obviously, in order for Aiko to feel Hajime's presence shouldn't be possible unless "Perception" was used, but Aiko simply called out his name because of her desires, while thinking that, Aiko couldn't say that she unconsciously muttered his name, she quickly thought that changing the topic would be the best choice.

[Um, besides that, why are you here……]

[To help, of course]

[Wa, for me? Nagumo-kun? You came all the way here to help me?]

To Aiko who began to blush and mumble strangely ~awaawa~,

Hajime carefully examined her stature, surely she hasn't already been brainwashed? Hajime thought while frowning. With a serious look in his eyes, he began to closely examine Aiko with his Magic Eye to look for signs of magic manipulation.

While walking up towards Aiko who sat on the bed, observing in great detail, Aiko started blushing a great deal and her heartbeat escalated. Anyways, the boy that she was just thinking about, came to help after hearing about her predicament, beside her on the bed at night, being watched by such an intense expression. It's just a student and teacher, there shouldn't be any particular problem right? Though she thought so…..Aiko wasn't confident to say it out loud, she became stiff as she could do nothing but return the gaze that Hajime is giving her.

Hajime, thinking that it'll be ok now that the Magic Eye didn't pick up any kind of magic manipulation, grabs onto Aiko's hand. He was going to remove the artifact that was binding her magic.

However, Aiko whose hand was suddenly grabbed [Hyau~!] a strange voice leaked out and she shrunk down a bit, [Stop! It's no good! Nagumo-kun! Such thing can't be permitted! I'm a teacher!], she began to yell.

[No, isn't it inconvenient if your magic is sealed? Or, is there something wrong with it? Though there doesn't seem to be any traps]

[Eh? Ah, this thing…..]

[…….what else is there]

[Ah, ahaha……sorry. Its nothing……]

Suspicion passes, Hajime's eyes began to show a disappointed look, Aiko tried to deceive him with a fake smile. And, changing the topic, asked how he knew where she was being locked up.

[The princess told us]

[Princess? Princess Ririna?]

[Ahh. She witnessed you being kidnapped. While judging that Amanogawa*Kouki* and them were under surveillance, she decided to escape the royal capital. Then she requested our help]

[Riri did…..then Nagumo-kun accepted her request]

[Maa~na, I seem to be responsible for this situation too…..though sensei might not have wanted to see me……well, please endure it until we return to everybody]

After Hajime finished removing the artifact that sealed Aiko's magic, he stood up. Aiko, predicted that Hajime's last line was about Shimizu's death. And, Aiko's eyes looked straight at the dubious Hajime, then began saying what she truly felt about it.

[Not wanting to see you, there's no such thing. You've come to help, I'm really glad. ……Certainly, Shimizu-kun's situation can't be completely forgotten, and it's likely to never to able to forget it….still, your intentions you had when you pulled the trigger….. I think I understand them. I don't hold a grudge against you, I don't hate you either]

[…….Sensei]

To the wide eyed Hajime, Aiko revealed an anxious smile with gentleness.

[At that time, because I couldn't say it properly…..now, please let me say it. ….Thank you for helping me. I'm sorry for making you pull the trigger]

[……..]

Hajime had a wry smile because it appears that Yue was correct, still, it's a fact that I've caused Aiko pain, however he couldn't bring it up.

[I, I only did what I wanted to do. Though I'll receive your gratitude, you don't have to apologize. Rather than that, lets leave soon. The princess should have reached Amanogawa and the rest already. After we join up with them, it's necessary to talk about the future]

[I understand. …..Nagumo-kun, please be careful. The church sees you as a heretic. And, to the one that kidnapped me, you are probably…..]

[I know. Either way, after I deliver you, I'll be taking care of the unfinished business, probably, at that time, the church and I will clash against one another. ….I've already prepared for it though]

Hajime nodded to Aiko with a gaze of strong will. Aiko's cheek becomes hot again due to the gaze, Aiko tried to word out her concerns once more.

but, at that time, a roaring sound of something breaking was heard from afar, the air also trembled a bit.

With that Aiko's body stiffens up and turns her eyes towards Hajime, Hajime was staring out and concentrating on something in the far distance. At that moment, Hajime gained information from Yue's group who's on the ground.

[Che, with this timing. …..well, in a sense it's convenient……]

After a while, Hajime glances back at Aiko while clicking his tongue. Though Aiko doesn't know that Hajime has telepathy, but because she knew he had a lot of artifacts, she guessed that he learned something, her glance gave off the impression of wanting to know what was going on.

[Sensei, it's a surprise attack from the Majinzoku*＜-Devils*. It seems that sound just now was the outer barrier covering the kingdom being broken to pieces]

[A surprise attack from the Majinzoku!? That means…..]

[Ahh, right now, the Hairihi Kingdom is being invaded. I've just gained information from my companions through "Telepathy". It appears that the Majinzoku also brought along a large army of demons. It's a complete surprise attack]

To Hajime's briefing, Aiko's face becomes pale, [That can't be], was leaked out while shaking her head.

Thats true. First of all, its impossible to not notice an invasion with the amount of forces that was advancing towards the kingdom, the great barrier that surrounds the Kingdom's capital was also strong enough to ward away all average attacks and was unexpectedly stubborn against powerful ones. No one would believe that the 2

biggest hurdles were completely cleared so easily.

[Sensei, first of all we'll temporarily join up with Amanogawa and the rest of the group. Then we'll talk about what to do]

[ye, yes]

Aiko who stiffened up from the tension, is now being held by Hajime's right hand. [Uhya!] A strange voice was leaked out, she wrapped her arms around Hajime's neck to the suddenness of the action.

Then in that moment….

Ka!!

A severe silver light poured in from the outside.

[~!?]

A light as strong as the moonlights rays came pouring into the room, instinctively alarm bells were raised in Aiko's mind.

However, Hajime wasn't shaken at all and proceeded to jump out of the room through the hole he previously made. Aiko screamed while clinging onto Hajime due to the rapid movements, there wasn't any time to worry.

Hajime, it was simultaneous, grabbing Aiko and dashing out of the room before the light completely eradicated the room in the very next moment.

Boba~!!

There wasn't a roaring sound when the room was crushed, it just simply evaporated, scattering into particles. The top of the temple was made of steel, now its become nothing more than particles much finer than sand, it was then blown away due to the night wind and disappeared into the sky.

To the specific phenomenon, Hajime while using "Aerodynamic" to stand in the air, opened his eyes wide and muttered.

[.....Was that…..decomposition?]

[Nicely answered, irregular]

To his short muttering came an unexpected answer, a voice resembling the ringing of a bell, however, it was cold and void of all emotions.

When Hajime turned his glance to where the voice sounded, there, a woman with silver hair and blue eyes glared at Hajime from the nearby rooftop. Hajime, then guessed that this was the woman that kidnapped Aiko.

In the first place, though unlike Ririana's description she wasn't wearing a nun's habit, instead, this woman was clad in a completely white dress and armor. The dress was sleeveless and only went up to knee height, her arms, legs, and head were clad in protective armor, and a metallic plate hung on both sides of her waist. Its the figure of a warrior no matter how you look at it. Exactly like a Valkyrie.

The silver haired woman, leaped through the air as if gravity had no hold of her. And, in one rotation positioned herself infront of the moon, a pair of silver wings expanded behind her back.

~basaa~ the wings expanded, it appears that the silver wings were shrouded in a silver-light magic. With the moon behind her, she looked mysteriously divine as her silver hair drifted in the wind, she carried beauty and charm that was out of this world.

However, unfortunately if not for her eyes. Despite her immense beauty, only her eyes gave off a cold impression as if frozen in ice. Not the coldness of hating another being. it was exactly like a single-minded mechanical tool. It was the eyes of a doll.

The silver haired woman, while looking down on Hajime with Aiko being held closely, slowly extended both arms out horizontally.

Then, the gauntlets shined momentarily, in the next moment, a large white sword was gripped in both hands. The large swords were nearly 2 meters in length and it was also clad in a silver-light magic, the silver haired woman who seemed unaffected by its weight, calls out to Hajime without an ounce of feelings.

[I am Nointo. I am “God’s Apostle”, for my master, I will remove all unnecessary pieces]

A declaration of war. The woman that introduced herself as Nointo, in the truest sense, she is “God’s Apostle”. Finally, it seems they’ve decided to intervene with Hajime. To directly remove us from “god’s game”.

Silver magic gushes out around Nointo. A huge pressure attacked Hajime and Aiko, it was as if they were standing underneath a huge waterfall.

Though Aiko was trying to endure it desperately, her expression turns blue then white, her body starts trembling uncontrollably. [We’re finished] nearly losing her consciousness, a bright red magic surrounded Aiko. The bright red magic shined even more to protect Aiko, it completely blocked out the pressure that Nointo released.

Aiko opened her eyes widely, she turned her face to Hajime who she assumed was the cause. Then, there, without even shaking one bit, he received the pressure, she saw Hajime’s appearance who was bearing his teeth ferociously.

As he received it, Aiko’s skeptical gaze was no longer on his mind, Hajime, just like Nointo, declared war.

[Kill me if you can, puppet of God]

With those words as the signal, at an altitude of 8,000 meters in the sky over [Kamiyama], “God’s Apostle” and the “Monster” that rose out from hell clashed with one another.

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Still, just in case of emergencies, Teio was put on standby somewhere in the Kingdom. This was because they needed someone to overlook the overall situation of the Kingdom.

As such, Yue's group traveled in the palace through hidden passages, and appeared into a guest room. Behind where they came through, the antique quietly returned to its natural spot, hiding the passageway as if nothing had happened.

[At this time, everyone is likely sleeping in their own rooms. ……For the time being, lets head for Shizuku's bedroom]

Ririana lowered her voice in the darkness. Then turned to face the direction of Shizuku's room. Rather than relying on Kouki the hero, her evaluation is realistically shown.

Nodding in agreement with Ririana, Shia leads the group because she has the highest perception in the party. Shizuku and the others are currently sleeping in the higher class rooms so they are currently in a separate building*<-or is it wing?*, the group is advancing through the corridors with silent steps as the moonlight seeps through.

And, after advancing a while, it happened.

Zudoooon!!

Pakyaaaan!!

The roaring sound resembled that of a bombardment, right afterwards, the sound of glass breaking could be heard throughout the Kingdom's capital. The air shook and trembled from the impact, the windows in the corridor that Yue's group was taking was also rattling.

[Wawa, what on earth!?]

[This is…..it can't be!?]

Shia while using her rabbit ears to their maximum point in order to hear people who might appear, instinctively covers up both of her rabbit ears while leaking out a voice. Right afterwards, Ririana's face turned pale and she rushed up to the window. Yue and them also approach the window to see what's going on.

And, to the spectacle that greets their eyes……

[Such a thing…..the great barrier…..it was broken?]

Ririana covers her mouth and says in a shaking voice. It's just as she said, in the night sky of the Kingdom's capital, the great barrier broke into particles of magic and scattered like dust.

Ririana can only watch the spectacle in amazement, a light flashed at that next moment, the roaring sound was heard once again. And, the thin film of light which covered the Kingdom's capital began wavering.

[Even the second barrier….why…..is it so fragile? With this, soon…..]

What is the great barrier that Ririana speaks of, there are three huge magic barriers that defend the Kingdom from foreign enemies. An artifact generates the barrier into three points, magicians of the imperial court pour their magic powers into it regularly in order to sustain the barriers. It's strength has been proven many times, the Kingdom has been defended from the Majinzoku's invasion for hundreds of years. This was one of the reasons why the war is still at a state of standstill.

A barrier of absolute protection was broken down in a single moment. And, just now, the second barrier was also close to breaking. The closer the barriers are to the Kingdom, the stronger they become, but if the second barrier was about to break at any moment now, it's only a matter of time before the last one falls as well. The royal palace is getting noisy, it appears they've noticed that the barrier was broken. Lights begin to flicker on at many places.

[It can't be, an inside job? ……But, giving a hand….to the enemy forces? Just what is going on….]

It was Yue and them who answered Ririana who was too absorbed in the idea while being stunned.

"Do you hear me? Mistress, should I brief you of the situation?"

Their telepathy stones started shining, a voice resounded from it. It’s the voice of Teio who was left at the Kingdom’s capital. From the way of talking, they’ve seemed to roughly grasp what’s going on.

“N…..please do, Teio”

“Understood. About one kilometer south from the Kingdom’s capital, there are Majinzoku leading a large army of demons. The white dragon from that time is there too. Its breath was what had destroyed the barrier. However, I don’t see the leaders figure”

[It can’t be, an invasion? How, how on earth did they manage to get so close……]

To Teio’s report, Ririana frowns with a doubtful expression.

Towards that doubtfulness, Yue and them could also imagine it. The rider of the white dragon, Freed Bagua, the Majinzoku from the time where space magic was obtained at [Mountain of Great Flames]. Even for Yue, it's virtually impossible to open a “gate” for a whole army to pass through, but if there was some assistance it might be possible.

To actually warp across the entire continent* <-they actually said something about North and South but because i couldn’t understand it i improvised and left it vague* without attracting attention, in order to appear right underneath our noses at the Kingdom’s capital. There is no other way but that. Though the white dragon is attacking, he probably can’t move around much if that were the case, he’s probably resting in the back giving orders.

In the mean time, the sound of glass being broken resounds through the air again. The second barrier was broken. While frustrated, Ririana urges to meet up with Kouki and them. However, Yue shook her head.

[.....We separate here. You guys go on]

[Na, here? what do you…..]

Ririana frowned dubiously and started to say that quickly meeting up with Kouki and the rest and planning their next actions would be best. While Yue was opening the window, her eyes narrowed and spoke of her reason coldly.

[……The Majinzoku rider of the white dragon hurt Hajime. …..I'm going to beat him until he cries]

Apparently, due to the surprise attack at [Mountain of Great Flames] Yue carried a deep grudge against Freed. All members at the place could do nothing towards Yue's dangerous atmosphere.

[A, are you angry, Yue-san…..]

[…..Shia? Have you already forgotten?]

[No way. I'll continue to beat him even if he starts crying and apologizing]

Though Shia instinctively tsukomied at the angry Yue, towards Yue's words that were expressionless, Shia started saying

something even more extreme. From Shia who usually had a bright smile* <-Improvised, something about her smile*, with an expressionless face she powerfully declared her stance. Shia also seemed to not be able to forgive what had happened before.

[And that's why, Kaori-san, Riri-san. Yue and I, in order to discipline the owner of that giant lizard, we'll be leaving here]

[.....N, anyone else who obstructs us as well]

As soon as they said that, both Yue and Shia went out the window without hearing what Kaori and Ririana's had to say. Freed's life is on the line. Escape, Freed! Quickly, run away! is what his companions would have said if they were there.

The night breeze and noise entered through the open window. For a while, Kaori and Ririana stood silently still in place, then they began to advance once again like nothing had happened.

[.....Nagumo-san….is very loved….]

[Yes…insanely…..if not.... they're quite the powerful enemies]

[Kaori….in order to survive, work hard ok? I'll support you]

[Yes. Thank you, Riri….]

Afterwards Riri turned around mutters in a sad voice, [The way I'm treated is becoming more and more crude….], the yell was admirably sent to Kaori. [Actually, would Riri cry if I said that I also wanted to go?] while thinking in the corner of her head, Kaori and Riri quickly hurried towards Kouki and the rest of the group.

This is not meant to be a perfect translation, I cannot read japanese characters and this was carefully edited based on translations I got from my Machine Translator. Therefore, there are bound to be errors here and there! At best, this could be considered as an unedited Final Draft towards an Official Translation

Frpm Chapter 100 to 125!

The Apostle's Raid, and The Kings Capital is Invaded

In a room where the only light source was produced by the moonlight rays, causing a contrast of black and white from the narrow grate window.

A simple and plain room can be seen. It's only around 6 tatami mats in size with a small desk, chair, wooden bed, and a simple toilet. If compared to Earth's prison cells, it's obvious that this is much worst.

In such a bad prison, sitting on the bed in the corner, is Hatanaka Aiko who is currently burying her face in her knees.

It's been 3 days since Aiko was brought to this room.

Due to the bracelet artifact worn on her wrist, Aiko could not use magic. Still, though she tried to escape at first, as expected, it wasn't possible to pry open a steel door with her physical strength alone, moreover, the opening of the grate window is only big enough for one of her arms to just barely pass through.

Even then, the current rooms position is at the very top of an expensive temple, it is the [Kamiyama]*God's Mountain* temple, even though it should be impossible to reach the ground safely, there are members of the church standing on watch.

In such a position, while worrying about her students safety, Aiko who cannot do anything is dejected and gloomy, Her already small body stature becomes even smaller on the bed.

[.....I need to get to my students…...but how……]

Aiko while looking up muttered slightly, she remembered what the nun with the silver hair had said to her as she was kidnaped. Aiko's thoughts, if what she heard from Hajime would become an inconvenience when told to Kouki and them, it's obvious who the "master" that she spoke of is. And it appears that they've taken interest in a student as well.

Aiko's mind became filled with unspeakable uneasiness. Recalling, the events of Ulu*Town where Hajime's group repelled the demon army*, where one of her students lost their life, Yukitoshi Shimizu. Possibly, again, another student will…., with these thoughts in her mind Aiko became more anxious.

Being confined in this open room, she tried to think about things that she could currently do. If she settled down and look back calmly, the royal palace felt too unnatural and covered with a thick sense of incongruity. In Aiko's mind, with a strong posture, she remembered the dangerous atmosphere that King Erihido and other leaders carried.

Surely, Aiko began to guess that the nun with silver hair had done something. She definitely said, "charm" if that was true then, surely, something along the lines of brainwashing was done.

However, at the same time, when talking with Shizuku and Ririana, such odd sense of incongruity was not there. Though becoming relieved about that, there is still a strong uneasiness built up in her chest due to being confined.

While praying for their safety, another concern was remembered. it was the words, “elimination of the irregular.” Those words were she heard just before completely losing consciousness, for some reason Aiko recalled a certain student.

The person that she owes her life to, the student that killed Yukitoshi Shimizu. While holding strong will and overpowering strength, the boy who thought seriously and listen to Aiko’s words. And, a lot of things happened, a various amount of things, deep inside, as expected deep inside, though she shouldn’t think about it, but she still ended up remembering.

The memory that she desperately tried to seal in her mind, is once again remembered, for some reason her cheeks become hot. Though Aiko was shaking her head to clear her mind of it, she begins to worry about Hajime’s safety, and carelessly muttered his name.

[……Nagumo-kun]

[Ou? what, sensei?]

[Fe!?]

From the sudden answer to her unconscious mumbling, she instinctively let out a unexpected voice. There shouldn’t be anyone else in the room, while looking throughout the room, Aiko

inclining her head, [Was it a hallucination?] she said. However, Aiko was definitely not hallucinating, again, she heard the voice.

[Over here, sensei]

[Eh?]

Aiko's body became alerted to the voice, it wasn't a hallucination after all! Her gaze peered towards the narrow grate window. There, it was the appearance of Hajime that was peeping through from the otherside.

[Eh? Eh? Nagumo-kun? Eh? This is the top floor….of this temple….eh?]

[Ah~, yes. First of all, calm down sensei. Im almost done confirming for traps……]

Disregarding Aiko's confused stare, Hajime confirms whether there are any traps with his Magic Eye, then "Transmuting" was used and bright red sparks appeared, a hole big enough for one person to pass through was made and with that the invasion was complete.

The room Aiko is confined in is about 100 meters above ground level. However, he entered as if he was on solid ground! That is to say, for Hajime to casually opened a hole and walked right in, caused Aiko to stare in shock.

Hajime shows a small smile towards the amazed Aiko.

[What, is it really that surprising. Didn't you notice that I was coming? Though I should have already cut off all traces of my presence……I've lost a bit of my confidence now]

[He? Noticed? Eh?]

[No, because, you call out my name. Didn't you sense me outside the window?]

Obviously, in order for Aiko to feel Hajime's presence shouldn't be possible unless "Perception" was used, but Aiko simply called out his name because of her desires, while thinking that, Aiko couldn't say that she unconsciously muttered his name, she quickly thought that changing the topic would be the best choice.

[Um, besides that, why are you here……]

[To help, of course]

[Wa, for me? Nagumo-kun? You came all the way here to help me?]

To Aiko who began to blush and mumble strangely ~awaawa~, Hajime carefully examined her stature, surely she hasn't already been brainwashed? Hajime thought while frowning. With a serious look in his eyes, he began to closely examine Aiko with his Magic Eye to look for signs of magic manipulation.

While walking up towards Aiko who sat on the bed, observing in great detail, Aiko started blushing a great deal and her heartbeat escalated. Anyways, the boy that she was just thinking about, came to help after hearing about her predicament, beside her on the bed

at night, being watched by such an intense expression. It's just a student and teacher, there shouldn't be any particular problem right? Though she thought so…..Aiko wasn't confident to say it out loud, she became stiff as she could do nothing but return the gaze that Hajime is giving her.

Hajime, thinking that it'll be ok now that the Magic Eye didn't pick up any kind of magic manipulation, grabs onto Aiko's hand. He was going to remove the artifact that was binding her magic.

However, Aiko whose hand was suddenly grabbed [Hyau~!] a strange voice leaked out and she shrunk down a bit, [Stop! It's no good! Nagumo-kun! Such thing can't be permitted! I'm a teacher!], she began to yell.

[No, isn't it inconvenient if your magic is sealed? Or, is there something wrong with it? Though there doesn't seem to be any traps]

[Eh? Ah, this thing…..]

[…….what else is there]

[Ah, ahaha……sorry. Its nothing……]

Suspicion passes, Hajime's eyes began to show a disappointed look, Aiko tried to deceive him with a fake smile. And, changing the topic, asked how he knew where she was being locked up.

[The princess told us]

[Princess? Princess Ririna?]

[Ahh. She witnessed you being kidnapped. While judging that

Amanogawa*Kouki* and them were under surveillance, she decided to escape the royal capital. Then she requested our help]

[Riri did…..then Nagumo-kun accepted her request]

[Maa~na, I seem to be responsible for this situation too…..though sensei might not have wanted to see me…...well, please endure it until we return to everybody]

After Hajime finished removing the artifact that sealed Aiko's magic, he stood up. Aiko, predicted that Hajime's last line was about Shimizu's death. And, Aiko's eyes looked straight at the dubious Hajime, then began saying what she truly felt about it.

[Not wanting to see you, there's no such thing. You've come to help, I'm really glad. ……Certainly, Shimizu-kun's situation can't be completely forgotten, and it's likely to never to able to forget it….still, your intentions you had when you pulled the trigger….. I think I understand them. I don't hold a grudge against you, I don't hate you either]

[…….Sensei]

To the wide eyed Hajime, Aiko revealed an anxious smile with gentleness.

[At that time, because I couldn't say it properly…..now, please let me say it. ….Thank you for helping me. I'm sorry for making you pull the trigger]

[……..]

Hajime had a wry smile because it appears that Yue was correct, still, it's a fact that I've caused Aiko pain, however he couldn't bring it up.

[I, I only did what I wanted to do. Though I'll receive your gratitude, you don't have to apologize. Rather than that, lets leave soon. The princess should have reached Amanogawa and the rest already. After we join up with them, it's necessary to talk about the future]

[I understand. …..Nagumo-kun, please be careful. The church sees you as a heretic. And, to the one that kidnapped me, you are probably…..]

[I know. Either way, after I deliver you, I'll be taking care of the unfinished business, probably, at that time, the church and I will clash against one another. ….I've already prepared for it though]

Hajime nodded to Aiko with a gaze of strong will. Aiko's cheek becomes hot again due to the gaze, Aiko tried to word out her concerns once more.

but, at that time, a roaring sound of something breaking was heard from afar, the air also trembled a bit.

With that Aiko's body stiffens up and turns her eyes towards Hajime, Hajime was staring out and concentrating on something in the far distance. At that moment, Hajime gained information from Yue's group who's on the ground.

[Che, with this timing. …..well, in a sense it's convenient……]

After a while, Hajime glances back at Aiko while clicking his tongue. Though Aiko doesn't know that Hajime has telepathy, but because she knew he had a lot of artifacts, she guessed that he learned something, her glance gave off the impression of wanting to know what was going on.

[Sensei, it's a surprise attack from the Majinzoku*<-Devils*. It seems that sound just now was the outer barrier covering the kingdom being broken to pieces]

[A surprise attack from the Majinzoku!? That means…..]

[Ahh, right now, the Hairihi Kingdom is being invaded. I've just gained information from my companions through "Telepathy". It appears that the Majinzoku also brought along a large army of demons. It's a complete surprise attack]

To Hajime's briefing, Aiko's face becomes pale, [That can't be], was leaked out while shaking her head.

Thats true. First of all, its impossible to not notice an invasion with the amount of forces that was advancing towards the kingdom, the great barrier that surrounds the Kingdom's capital was also strong enough to ward away all average attacks and was unexpectedly stubborn against powerful ones. No one would believe that the 2 biggest hurdles were completely cleared so easily.

[Sensei, first of all we'll temporarily join up with Amanogawa and the rest of the group. Then we'll talk about what to do]

[ye, yes]

Aiko who stiffened up from the tension, is now being held by Hajime's right hand. [Uhya!] A strange voice was leaked out, she wrapped her arms around Hajime's neck to the suddenness of the action.

Then in that moment….

Ka!!

A severe silver light poured in from the outside.

[~!?]

A light as strong as the moonlights rays came pouring into the room, instinctively alarm bells were raised in Aiko's mind.

However, Hajime wasn't shaken at all and proceeded to jump out of the room through the hole he previously made. Aiko screamed while clinging onto Hajime due to the rapid movements, there wasn't any time to worry.

Hajime, it was simultaneous, grabbing Aiko and dashing out of the room before the light completely eradicated the room in the very next moment.

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[……The Majinzoku rider of the white dragon hurt Hajime. …..I'm going to beat him until he cries]

Apparently, due to the surprise attack at [Mountain of Great Flames] Yue carried a deep grudge against Freed. All members at the place could do nothing towards Yue's dangerous atmosphere.

[A, are you angry, Yue-san…..]

[…..Shia? Have you already forgotten?]

[No way. I'll continue to beat him even if he starts crying and apologizing]

Though Shia instinctively tsukomied at the angry Yue, towards Yue's words that were expressionless, Shia started saying something even more extreme. From Shia who usually had a bright smile* < -Improvised, something about her smile*, with an expressionless face she powerfully declared her stance. Shia also seemed to not be able to forgive what had happened before.

[And that's why, Kaori-san, Riri-san. Yue and I, in order to discipline the owner of that giant lizard, we'll be leaving here]

[.....N, anyone else who obstructs us as well]

As soon as they said that, both Yue and Shia went out the window without hearing what Kaori and Ririana's had to say. Freed's life is on the line. Escape, Freed! Quickly, run away! is what his companions would have said if they were there.

The night breeze and noise entered through the open window. For a while, Kaori and Ririana stood silently still in place, then they began to advance once again like nothing had happened.

[.....Nagumo-san….is very loved….]

[Yes…insanely…..if not.... they're quite the powerful enemies]

[Kaori….in order to survive, work hard ok? I'll support you]

[Yes. Thank you, Riri….]

Afterwards Riri turned around mutters in a sad voice, [The way I'm treated is becoming more and more crude….], the yell was admirably sent to Kaori. [Actually, would Riri cry if I said that I also wanted to go?] while thinking in the corner of her head, Kaori and Riri quickly hurried towards Kouki and the rest of the group.

Matchless Shia

To the sudden attack which broke the barrier and appearance of the Majinzoku, the Kingdoms capital has fallen into chaos.

As people start running out of their houses, what greets their stunned faces is the great barrier shattering, to such a site, the patrol groups could only angrily shout, [Don't leave your houses!]. The ones with quick thinking quickly pull themselves together, they attempt to leave the capital with only the bare minimum luggage, meanwhile a significant amount of people gathered at the royal palace gates to seek shelter! Screams were heard.

Although it was late at night, with this amount of noise, it wouldn't be weird for a mob to be formed in the next few minutes. Especially because the royal palace wasn't able to calm down the confusion either. Anyways, right now the royal palace is confused the most about the situation. Especially when everything happened in the flash of a few seconds, by the time they noticed they were placed into a situation where a sword was already drawn before their throats. It's to be expected.

Although they were trying to quickly assemble their army…..

Pakyaaaan~!!

It was not on time.

The last barrier was finally broken, the force of demons that were created through Age of God magic and Majinzoku soldiers surged in on them making the land rumble in the process. Their last defensive line was only a wall made of stone which enclosed the Kingdom's capital. Although that's the only thing, it was still boasted of having considerable strength…….however thinking that it would last very long would be too optimistic.

In order to crush the wall, the Majinzoku assembled multiple people to cast advanced magic. Along with that the demons casted peculiar flame and lightning magic, ice shards and rock shards shot out, and a group of cyclops-beetles which were 4 meter in length started scraping the walls with their maces.

Even at a different location, there were boar typed demons which measured up to 5 meters in length, bashing against the wall with intense force while clad in wind to increase their power, with that, a destruction on the level of an earthquake struck the wall with every impact. Furthermore, the demons with flight such as black eagles and grey dragons were in the skies and completely ignored the wall and continued in to invade the capital.

Though the soldiers that were stationed on top of the wall were fighting back desperately, towards the unexpected large army, their interception was badly carried out. It was as if trying to counterattack a steel train's rush with an airsoft gun.

In such a situation, standing by Teio who was watching the overall situation from the big clock tower in the capital, were Yue and Shia who had just left the royal castle.

[…….Teio, have you found that guy?]

[Teio-san, where's the idiotic guy at?]

[....You guys….no, ma~a, although I understand your feelings? [With everyone gathered together it's much more reassuring!] is what I remember Princess Ririana saying, shes quite pitiful…..to be discarded so easily]

[……Don't mind]

[It's a minor thing]

Teio was staring at Yue and Shia with an amazed expression, the 2 didn't seem to think much about it at all. This must also be Hajime's influence. they're not interested if they have no opponent.

Yue and Shia both have their eyes opened wide while looking for Freed Bagua, then their telepathy stones reacted. Hajime's voice came from it.

"Oi! Teio! Come over here immediately!"

"Nuo~! Master? What's wrong?"

Due to the unexpectedly strong voice which came from the telepathy stone, Teio who was called instinctively expressed her surprise.

"A dangerous one came out. I want you to take care of Sensei. Otherwise I won't be able to go all out"

"!? Alright, I understand! I'll head over there immediately!"

Teio who recognised that Hajime was fighting an opponent where he needed to be at full power, in an instant used “Dragon Transformation”, then quickly dashed towards the target which was 8,000 meters in the sky.

“.....Hajime, be careful”

“Hajime-san! Yue-san and I will be going to finish off the demon tamers so don’t worry!”

“Ha? Aren’t you guys with the Princess….U～uo, that was close! Sorry, it doesn’t seem like I’ll be able to talk in this situation! Though I don’t know what you guys plan on doing, be careful as well”

Though Haime seemed doubtful about what Shia said, due to the intense battle he was in, he had to cut the connection. While protecting Aiko, the opponent wasn’t letting up against Hajime at all, in an instant, Yue and Shia started thinking if they should go and help.

[Yue-san, what will you do?]

[.....If its Hajime then it’ll be alright. Teio will be there too. More so, we need to take care of the demon tamer. Also, we can’t allow them to break the Age of Gods magic’s magic formation]

Right, the reason why Yue came out to the battlefield, though there was also the reason for getting revenge for Hajime, she couldn’t just let the other Age of Gods magic bearer, Freed, run around unchecked.

In the case that Freed knew where the great labyrinth at [Kamiyama] was at, Just like before at [Mountain of Great Flames] he'll likely head there first, Moreover he might destroy the magic formation afterwards. They noticed that monsters and structure of [Mountain of Great Flames] will gradually be restored, so its possible that overtime everything will be restored, but it's unknown how much time it would actually take. Therefore, Yue who wanted to avoid that at any costs, decided to attack Freed.

In the first place, retaliation was 90% of the reason…..

then, at that time, while on top of the clock tower Yue and Shia noticed, two demons looking like a black eagle at approximately 3 to 4 meters in length, while eyeing Yue and Shia they then dove down to attack from both the left and right.

Ku~eeeeee!!

The black eagles let out a courageous shout and approached, without looking Shia takes out [Doryukken]*<-Her hammer* from the "Treasure Warehouse" and sets it to shooting mode, then without hesitation shot out an exploding slug bullet. Yue as well, without looking just snaps her fingers with her right hand and innumerable wind blades shot out like heavy rain.

Of the two black eagles which were approaching the girls, one's head blew up due to a shock wave, and the other, like being executed by a Guillotine was chopped up into pieces, their tragic appearances fell onto the roof of a civilians house. At that time, the people who were inside the house heard the noise and became extremely nervous from the sound.

After those two were killed, all demons with flight turned around and noticed Yue and Shia. If you looked closely, you'd notice that about a third of them had Majinzoku riding on them. After looking like they were surveying the situation when noticing the two eagles dropping down, understanding that the other party was an Usagininzoku and petite girl, as if looking at an idiot, they snorted at Yue and Shia, then began chanting their magic.

Both Yue and Shia didn't have any intentions to guard the kingdom from the big army, however their purpose was Freed Bagua, it was like trying to leave without permission, there was no other way but to counterattack when being targeted.

For now, Shia says, [We aren't enemies~, just now we were attacked so there was no other choice~], although they were laughing at the foolishness it didn't seem like they had any intentions of stopping their attacks.

The Majinzoku thought the opponent was worthless so they proceeded and left a few friends behind to deal with it, in the next moment, the screams and roaring sound of their last moments resounded out from behind, and when they turned around to see the cause, their eyes became wide in astonishment.

Googaa~aaaaa!!

It was a dragon made of thunder, roaring as it devoured their friends and demons one after another.

To the spectacle, the Majinzoku could only stare in blank surprise. Trying to escape from the thunder dragon, is a Majinzoku desperately trying to get away towards his friends on his demon, stretching out his hand, as if asking for help……however, in the next instant an exploding slug bullet flew through the wind with murderous intent from behind, and the gray dragon and its rider broke into pieces.

The situation just now wasn't understood, although the blood relatives of those who died became ferocious.*Improvised, I don't actually get this line at all, something about blood relations, 魔人族のものか灰竜のものか分からない血肉が先行していた魔人族達にビチャビチャと降りかかる*

The Majinzoku that became stiff, pulled themselves together and prepared to pursue the cause. And, looked for the girls who crushed their companion in an instant. Due to the unexpectedness they began seeing illusions of their own deaths, with the high tension they forgot to even wipe their own sweat as they strained their eyes. And, in front of them appeared Yue and Shia.

However, to them their appearance was completely unexpected. Because, rather than hiding from the group pursuing them, they stayed in the same place, Yue and Shia didn't even bother looking at them. Just like the first time, they concentrated their sights on searching for something outside of the wall. Their backs spoke louder than words.

In other words, they couldn't care less.

The moment they guessed that, the Majinzoku's expressions which were stiff with high tension distorted into anger and rage. While

breaking their comrades into pieces, in Yue and Shia's eyes, they were nothing more than pebbles being kicked on the roadside, as a warrior, or due to their pride as Majinzoku being trampled. Heat runs through their entire bodies and their blood boiled.

[Damn you---!!]

[U～ooooooo!!]

[Die--!!]

While consumed by anger, their abilities as soldiers were naturals and they got into their positions, they showed great teamwork. They formed a box on all sides to surround them and then they all shot magic at the same time. The magic of the Majinzoku were excellent. Normally, the scene would cause someone's expression to twist in despair.

However, they were amazed by Yue's bored expression. Then, she flexed her finger like a thin baton.

[……The difference in ability, you should learn to realize it instinctively]

At the same time that she said those words, all the magic were completely blocked out by the thunder dragon coiling around Yue and Shia like a cocoon. And, the thunder dragon once again opened its jaws like a gate, as if they were committing suicide, they all looked as if they were voluntarily jumping in.

Then expecting that multiple people on the other side would begin chanting magic which excel in penetration, another part of the thunder dragon opened, there Shia who's Usamimi's were fluttering dove out with the speed of a cannonball.

In an instant, all the nearby Majinzoku knew that she planned to obstruct their chants, so they all casted the beginner class magic flame bullet which practically took no time to cast at all.

However, Shia, as if she didn't even care, dodged all the bullets with simple outbursts from using Doryukken to change her orbit, she then swung Doryukken sideways aiming at the three Majinzoku who were chanting.

[Ri~ya~aaaaa!]

With one shout. Doryukken which was held, due to gravity magic obtained the weight of 4 tons on momentary impact. With that, her body was also strengthened through physical reinforcement. The result was better off unsaid. The three Majinzoku's upper bodies were blasted away, even the demons that were being ridden, their spines were crushed due to the shockwave and they were blown away while raising the screams of their last moments.

Shia who was still in the air, in that instant cut down Doryukken and her own weight to 5 kilos or less, and again, danced through the air like a feather. Then, switching Doryukken back into shooting mode, exploding slug bullets were let loose aiming at the Majinzoku's that shot the flame bullets. As intended, once again in the night sky of the Kingdom, bright red flowers bloomed.

Shia, she pulls out 2 colorful disks which shot out into the air from the “Treasure Warehouse”, they floated in the air disregarding gravity and was being used as a stand. She looked over the surroundings while in place, tapping Doryukken on her shoulder.

Just then, in a place a little away, the last Majinzoku left was about to desperately commence a suicide attack on Yue.

[Little girl(..)ga～aa!! I’m gonna kill you!!]

With bloodshot eyes, and a, even if I’m stabbed! kind of feeling could be felt from his desperation. However, Yue’s attitude towards him was cool like a wet blanket.

[……..You’re 300 years too early, boy(..)]

He probably planned on attacking when the thunder dragon was still dealing with his friend. However, his lips distorts when he thinks that what Yue’s words meant was that the thunder dragon had already returned, immediately after that, his head was cleanly cut off by a wind blade that came from below and it flew into the alleyway with spinning eyes.

After time was meaninglessly taken, Yue began to search for Freed once again. Next to her, Shia landed while carrying Doryukken.

[They completely think that we’re part of the Kingdom’s fighting forces right?]

[.....It doesn't matter. They can think that if they want]

[How dry. ….Ma~a, it certainly seems that way….]

The two joked around with each other as Freed was not easily found, Maybe, he's already gone to the great labyrinth through space magic…….they began to become uneasy, then,

[~!? Yue-san!]

[N~]

At the same time as Shia's warning, Yue jumped away from the clock tower without hesitation. Immediately after that, an oval film appeared in the middle of air, a large aurora gushed out from it. The aurora completely erased the upper part of the clock tower where Yue and them were standing, however it was so powerful that the building was blown off radically.

[As expected, some kind of foresight. How annoying…..]

At the same time that the masculine voice resounded, the Majinzoku, Freed Bagua who had red hair and was the white dragon's rider, appeared from the oval film. From his expression, you could see irritation from the ease of dodging the surprise attack.

Then a white dragon's appearance came through the "gate", along with several Majinzoku riding on the back of black eagles and grey dragons appearing by the hundreds, Yue and Shia were completely

surrounded.

At the same time……a terrible roaring sound is heard and a part of the outer wall was finally destroyed, afterwards demons and Majinzoku's invade the capital one after another, some of the troops saw Yue and Shia and rushed up fiercely at them. It appears that they intend on completely killing Yue and Shia here once and for all.

[I can't believe that you've managed to survive from that situation. …..As I expected, that man's passion to survive……is too dangerous. To start with, we'll completely kill you who is that guy's companions]

Towards the words of Freed which contained hatred, however, Yue and Shia were both fearless. And, they both replied back at the same time. It strangely, was the same words that the boy whom they loved currently in the sky 8,000 meters above the ground had said.

[[Kill us if you can (please)]]

As if those words were a signal, the surrounding demons and Majinzoku's shot magic all at once.

Flame spears of the caliber which was enough to even scorch the atmosphere were flying around, lasers of water were shot out cutting through space, wind of murderous intent became blades and attacked, a bombardment of ice and snow roared out, sands of petrification and permanent poison scatters about, and a whip of

thunder shaped like a snake moved around in the night sky. And, an Aurora tore through the sky just in case.

A group of 40 Majinzoku or more and over 100 demons. In every direction, lies an enemy. The sight is filled with a storm of attacks.

However, Yue and Shia, were still calm despite being surrounded by death on all sides, their postures showed no sign of attempting to dodge. Some Majinzoku, [Have they given up……], as their expressions showed that they were losing momentum, only Freed raised his awareness because of an unpleasant presentiment which rose intensely from within.

[“Field Pierce”*I think? 界穿*]

Yue activated her Age of Gods magic.

Immediately after that, two shining gates appeared before the Aurora. Freed dubiously drops his eyebrow. When connecting the gate to such coordinates, even if they teleport the aurora, it’ll likely appear out of the other gate for a direct hit.

However, that expectation, could only be assumed if only one pair of gates were created. Freed based his expectation on his own limitations.

Therefore, he couldn’t understand why Yue and Shia jumped through the gate, it wasn’t possible for him to notice immediately

that a gate had already appeared behind them.

[Cra-, evade it!]

Yue and Shia disappeared through the other gate, the moment when the aurora connected with the gate, though Freed who noticed his misunderstanding warned his companions, but it was already too late.

Although Freed himself was able to evade on time, many subordinates behind him (.....) while being directly hit by the aurora became slightly conscious that they were dying, and with that only a few were left.

[Curse you, killing my subordinates. ……I didn't expect you to be able to open 2 at the same time….does that mean I've still underestimated you……]

Rage filled his eyes, at the same time, he was also in awe that Yue was able to create both gates simultaneously and properly succeeded to use it in combat. There was also no traces of chanting or using magic formations either, though he confirmed their true nature in his mind, right now, it's necessary to look for the 2 missing people.

[Freed! Over there!]

One of Freed's subordinates pointed outside the outer wall.

Certainly Yue and Shia were there.

It was difficult to fight as houses were right underneath them. If Freed truly hopes for a confrontation between them, it would be unlikely that he would just continue invading the Kingdom's capital, and so he would transfer himself directly outside of the outer walls. Of course, it would be an emergency situation if he actually continued his invasion instead of confronting Yue and Shia, as the sickle of the death god would surely swing down on his back.

Because Freed also understood this, he couldn't turn his back against them. Yue stretched her right hand out and with her finger ~Kui Kui~ bent it as gesture to approach, from this action, all Majinzoku's rage exceeded their boiling point.

It was obvious that the young girl with a childish appearance was provoking them, and the detestable Usagininzoku who slaughtered their comrades was also there, with that in their minds, [We'll be your opponents], while lining up their sights….the provocation wasn't possible to ignore due to their own pride as the superior race even if the opponents were few in numbers.

[You're only a little girl!]

[You dirty beast, don't get so full of it!]

While shouting such abusive words, all the Majinzoku attacked at the same time. They sent the demons after Yue who was able to fire off fatal magic in rapid succession without time lags at all. From the ground, part of the large army also attacks Yue and Shia fiercely.

Shia, thanks to the “Treasure Warehouse”, was able to continuously fire out explosive slug bullets which were practically unlimited in number. In the sky, and even on the ground, Shia’s magical power emits a color resembling moonstones, rippling out, in the next instant, it was converted into a shockwave and destruction scattered everywhere. The only thing that remained were only their broken corpses, crushed as if they were ran over to death.

And, there, the white dragon and grey dragons all vomited out their breaths at once. The attack would be fatal to Shia even with physical strengthening applied when hit directly. However, Shia wasn’t panicking at all.

[“Exceeding Curse”* <-unsure, original text 絶禍*]

Yue shot out a black swirling globe which appeared before Shia’s eyes. The jet black sphere contained supergravity, just like a black hole, the aurora’s approaching Shia were twisted then completely devoured.

[Ku, you used it last time too. …..that Age of God magic that I don’t know of. All members,listen! I’ll take care of the blond caster! You all gang up and kill that Usagininzoku! Separate them apart, don’t allow them to cooperate!]

[[[[[Understood!]]]]]

It appears that, Shia serves as Yue’s vanguard and while away looked like she was breathing exhaustively, the rear guards decided to separate Yue in order to defeat them both. Though that’s what it

seems, when Shia started to evacuate towards Yue, the Majinzoku riding an especially huge black eagle which was clad in a huge tornado, charged out like a cannonball.

Shia who was in the air, wielded Doryukken and looked as if she was going to throw it, due to the unexpected timing, the Majinzoku prepared themselves in a suicide attack, the other side wasn't supposed to be able to respond on time. With one rotation while in place using the outbursts from Doryukken, all attacks coming from the Majinzoku were stopped and they were all blown away radially.

In a rush, the Majinzoku on the black eagle cladded in a tornado tried to confront her, as expected there was no time for her to counter the attack, even evading wouldn't be on time either, so she took up Doryukken as a shield and increased her physical power as well. One of Doryukken's gimmicks activated, while making a sound ~Kashun Kashun~ a round shield formed.

[Even if it's just you! I'll definitely kill you without fail!]

the Majinzoku with short blond hair shouted out, while looking at Shia with eyes filled with hatred from his companions being killed, and collided with Doryukken which was held up.

Shia who was pushed back was separated from Yue, although she tried to increase her weight to withstand the push, before it was actually carried out, a black teleport gate had already opened up behind her. In that instant Yue and Shia's glances overlapped, the rash suicide attack was meant to buy time for Freed to cast his space magic.

“Yue-san! I’m sorry! We’ve been separated!”

“N…..there’s no problems. I’ll kill this fellow here.”

Immediately before being pushed into the gate, Yue with a thumb sticking up said, [Good luck*＜-in an american accent*!], Shia smiled a little from that. The smile was seen by the Majinzoku riding the huge black eagle, his face twisted into rage, although he didn’t really mind Shia, It was Yue’s own comrade that was swallowed into the gate, which meant that they were now both separated.

[That frivolously smiling face, how disgusting. When your Limbs are torn apart we’ll drag them in front of your man]

The first Majinzoku that passed through said while exiting the gate. Seeming unlike the rest of the Majinzokus, Shia guessed that it was due to a personal grudge, while frowning dubiously she asked him.

[…….Have we met somewhere? I don’t remember having done anything to receive such stares though?]

[Do you still remember that Majinzoku woman with red hair?]

Shia who couldn’t understand why the sudden talk of a woman turned up could only incline her head in wonder. But, the male Majinzoku, took that act as not being able to remember, while clenching his teeth together, he voiced out further information about his grudge.

[You bastard, the woman that you guys killed at [Orcus Great Labyrinth]]

[.....Ah! That person!]

[You bastard~]

It was very clear that Shia had forgotten all about it until now, the man who was already mad till the boiling point shot out numerous blades of wind with short chants. There, Shia avoided them as if they were nothing.

[Wait a sec, who was that person to you? With just what was said a while ago I still don't understand]

[Cattleya, the woman that you guys murdered…..was my fiancee!]

[! Ah, I see…..what about it]

Shia nodded as she consented.

It seems that the man in front of her, was the lover that the woman at [Orcus Great Labyrinth] whispered her love to for before dying-------it was Mikhail*I think the K is supposed to be silent?*. Though she doesn't understand how he found out, he knew that Hajime was the one that had killed his fiancee, he looks as if he's burning with revenge. To make Hajime feel the same feelings that he did, he plans to bring both Shia and Yue's corpses forth in front of him.

[How dare you, Cattleya……was wise and gentle, she always thought of her country…..]

Mikhail who was shouting out his grudge with bloodshot eyes, Shia's usual brightness became cold as if it were a lie, and replied with extremely light words.

[I don't know anything about that]

[Wh, what was that!]

[No, if she didn't want to die she could have just not fight? In the first place she was the one that challenged us. Hajime-san even warned her. We won't chase if you run away. If a important person was killed, it's obvious that they'd bear a grudge….even if you told what the person who was killed was like……we're not interested……do you guys hear me? Just like all the lives of the ones that you've taken up till now…..there's no way you'd be interested]

[Sh, shut up, shut up, shut up! Cattleya's enmity*or enemy, whichever floats your boat*! I'm going to torment you until you go mad, then kill you!]

Mikhail, yelling as if he lost his temper, another tornado was produced again to increase the huge black eagle's speed while plunging towards Shia. It appears that the tornado was Mikhail's magic and not the huge black eagle's inherent ability. While riding, Mikhail continued chanting and numerous wind blades shot out from the tornado in an attempt to block Shia's escape routes.

Shia, wielding Doryukken, knocked down the wind blades and then lightened her weight as she jumped to a disk as a stand in order to avoid the charge of the tornado cladded eagle.

However, before she avoided it, troops of Majinzoku riding black eagles gathered as Shia and Mikhail were talking. Because Mikhail was riding the huge black eagle, they were likely his subordinates.

Shia was in a situation where all the black eagle forces that were in the skies shot out needles of stone at her. It was exactly like a downpour of rain. Shia shot out exploding slug bullets to create shockwaves in order to knock down the needles.

And, jumped to a nearby black eagle after opening a way through the barrage. Disregarding the startled Majinzoku, she swung Doryukken without any hesitation. The Majinzoku that was hit vanished into the darkness of the night as all his internal organs and bones were crushed.

Shia further continued to use her momentum of the attack and crushed the Majinzoku and the black eagle that were away from the rest.

[Ku, do not engage in close combat! The sky is our domain! Attack with waves of magic and stone needles from a distance!]

Towards the comrades that were blown away like a pinball, Mikhail judged that close combat would be impossible and ordered for all attacks to be strictly ranged. Again, Shia was forced to avoid their magic and stone needles that came from all directions by continually jumping off the disks that she sent out as stepping stones.

However, she never got within range to attack, every time she moved up they distanced themselves and she was becoming irritated at that fact. And then, she judged that it wouldn't be efficient if she only used exploding slug bullets, she pulled out a new item from the "Treasure Warehouse".

It was a red metallic ball. It was approximately 2 meters in diameter. A chain extends from the metallic ball and Shia attached it to the top of Doryukken. Then, she used her leg to kick up the metallic ball that was dropping due to gravity and swung horizontally at the metallic ball with Doryukken.

Gagin~!!

With a roaring sound the metallic ball flew out at an unbelievable speed.

While panicking the targeted Majinzoku tried to quickly evade it, however suddenly, the side of the metallic ball bursted out and with that it's course changed. The Majinzoku and his black eagle were not able to respond to the suddenness, the metallic ball which weighed up to 10 tons collided into them, they were instantly killed as every bone in their bodies were crushed in the night sky.

Shia pulled back the chain with Doryukken and the metallic ball which just slaughtered its enemy quickly returns to her reach. And as it was returning she was firing out exploding slug bullets in rapid successions in order to keep the others in check, or, simply to kill them. When the metallic ball returned, it was then once again launched at another target.

Right, what is Doryukken's newest gimmick, it's basically "Kendama"*A certain Japanese toy* with a built-in system that allows it to change its weight and shoot out shells in order to change its trajectory.

[Uriyaaaaaaaa~!]

Shia continued to play kendama in the night sky of the Kingdom's capital while letting out shouts. When the ball was sent off, its trajectory was always changing and it always returned after blowing away its target. The "Kendama" became a red meteor that shot out irregularly throughout the night sky, it began to turn even more red as the blood of enemies were smeared on it.

[Curse you, such strange techniques! Above! Attack her from outside of her range!]

Mikhail, while biting his lips from his subordinates being killed one after another, gave out orders for a barrage of attacks to be sent out in order to keep her in check and buy time for him to cast his own magic. Shia easily avoids the attacks as if dancing in the air weightlessly.

Then, Immediately after avoiding the last attack, ranged attack magic poured down over her head like a wall.

Shia held the center of Doryukken over her head and began to turn it in circles. With that, the metallic ball that was connected by its chain also began to rotate due to the centrifugal force and was swung along with Doryukken. Doryukken and the Kendama rotated

at high-speeds with intense force, it became an improvised roundshield which was also bordered with a red color, the magic attacks that were pouring down were all blown away and dispersed because of the matchless force.

[You're mine!]

Mikhail who judged that she would be too busy dealing with the overhead attacks, charged at Shia. The huge black eagle shot out an extraordinary amount of stone needles which ran along with the wind magic "Cannon Emperor"* <-good chance this skill name is wrong, 砲皇*. The local storm raised a howl as it rushed towards Shia.

Shia allowed herself to free-fall in order to reduce her altitude quickly and avoided the bombardment of wind. Mikhail's lips twisted as expected, again he decided to aim for the moment when she lands due to evading, he planned to shoot out more blades of wind.

However, In the eyes of Mikhail who was watching his target, Shia did not have an expression wrapped in despair, the spectacle that he saw was that an fist sized iron ball appeared from thin air underneath Shia's feet and she bounced off it.

Shia took out the iron ball from the "Treasure Warehouse" and used her legs at maximum strength to launch herself off of it. The iron ball that was kicked out at an overpowering velocity, with perfect aim, hit the Huge black eagle which Mikhail was ridding! The vivid sound of flesh caving in could be heard.

Kuueeeeeeee～!!!

The huge black eagle screamed from the pain of the impact as it falls while spinning. Mikhail again, shot out a cannonball of wind that contained stone needles in desperation as he fell with the huge black eagle.

Shia who finally passed by all magic attacks that came down at her head, bounced away the quickly approaching cannonball of wind using Doryukken. However, the needles made of stone couldn't be completely avoided, some of the needles pierced into her shoulder and arm.

[We did it! she was struck by Kotorisu's stone needles!]

[With this it's over!]

The needles themselves didn't deal much damage, however all the Majinzoku looked equally joyful that Shia was hit by the stone needles.

Shia looked at their suspicious expressions.

The answer to her question was answered immediately. Starting from where the needles were sticking out, she began to petrify. It appears that Kotorisu was the name of the huge black eagle, it's inherent magic seemed to allow its stone needles to petify upon contact. it was an unpleasant and troublesome ability.

Normally, when afflicted with an abnormal status you'd use specific medicine to cure it, or purify it with recovery light magic. However, right now Shia is alone on the battlefield so the Majinzoku's thought it was already over. As long as they continue attacking her without giving her a chance to take medicine she'll be completely petrified.

However, in the very next moment, their expressions which were convinced of victory, changed into one that was dumbfounded, and finally changed into despair.

Because…..

[Mmm~, what a blunder. However, if its just this much!]

While saying so, Shia pulled out and threw away the needles and in order to concentrate she closed her eyes. Then in one moment, the petrification that was gradually spreading, stopped suddenly, following that, the flesh that had turned to stone regained its former color. And, finally, the wound from the needles were also patched up, she returned to her normal state as if nothing happened.

[W, Why!]

[What's going on!]

There wasn't any signs of recovery magic being used, there also wasn't any behaviors of using medicine either, however Shia easily cured the petrification and damage from the needles by just

concentrating a little, fear began to appear on the Majinzoku's expressions. A fear of the unknown which couldn't be understood. Their voices were upset and trembling.

There's no need to think much about how Shia managed to heal herself. She simply used reproduction magic. As usual, her aptitude with it was rather bad, it was only enough to be able to heal wounds and abnormal statuses within her body.

Her self heal was like the downgraded version of Yue's "Automatic Reproduction", she can even cure serious illnesses, however it's not automatic and she cannot reproduce something external. However, a few wounds or simple fractures would heal within several seconds with a little bit of concentration and if she spends more time she can also recover from serious illnesses.

There's no helping it that the Majinzoku were despairing. Because including her overwhelming power she also possesses the ability to recover, they couldn't think of any methods to corner her. The eyes that were looking at Shia were the same eyes that the people who confronted Hajime had. In other words, a monster! Then.

[Sa~a, here I come?]

Shia while holding Doryukken quickly appears before the eyes of the stiff and confused Majinzoku. Then, a deadly blow! with just one hit, another Majinzoku died. At that moment, the remaining Majinzoku went into panic and yelled out an incomprehensible cry, there was absolutely no cooperation and they began to suicide attack recklessly.

Shia calmly, while brandishing the Kendama, or through the use of exploding slug bullets, quickly and surely reduces their numbers.

Finally the last man of Mikhail's forces became food for Doryukken, however the moonlight was suddenly shut out and a shadow covered the entire area.

Shia looked up above, behind the dark clouds, Mikhail was falling from the sky. It looks like the huge black eagle was also at its limits, a straight dive attack might have been all it was capable of now.

[Innumerable thunder pouring down from the sky, avoid it if you can!]

At the same time that Mikhail shouted, innumerable amounts of thunder poured down while roaring out disorderly. It was like an intense rain of thunder. This magic originally caused a very large thunder strike to fall from the dark clouds, an advanced attack magic "Thunder Mallet" of the wind system, he daringly multiplied it, he likely created it as an Area of Effect magic. With that alone, you could tell how advanced Mikhail was with magic.

The thunder quickly overtakes Mikhail and pours straight down towards Shia.

Most likely, in order to absolutely kill her, he took up the resolution to stab her despite his own thunder raining down as a suicide attack. He's already used up a lot of power just multiplying the thunder, however superhuman Shia may be, she's not fast

enough to avoid the thunderbolts.

The speed of which thunder falls is 150 kilometers per second. It's not possible to avoid it after recognizing it. In Mikhail's eyes, as his subordinates were killed one after another he was enduring it while single-mindedly continuing his chant using all the magic power in his body, this time for sure, she'll fall! His will of strength could be seen.

However, immediately afterwards, Mikhail saw an unbelievable scene. Unexpectedly, Shia had avoided the thunderbolts raining down. No, more accurately, it was as if she knew exactly where the area that wouldn't be hit was and moved there before the thunderbolts fell.

It was Mikhail's miscalculation. Shia had a technique that allowed her to avoid things even before it became recognizable.

A deviation of her inherent magic "Future Sight" and "Revelation Sight". It allowed her to see up to 2 seconds into the future. Although it's a downgraded version of her "Future Assumption" sight, rather it doesn't even use magic power, it's a convenient ability that can be used in rapid successions several times. It was the result of Shia's efforts from continuously training.

[What are you, what exactly are you!]

[.....I'm just a rabbit eared woman]

He couldn't believe what he saw, Shia had avoided every

thunderbolt, naturally, Mikhail's attack while diving down can easily be fended off, she wielded the Kendama and waited for him to pass by.

Then, the Kendama circled greatly around Mikhail, the chains coiled around him and he was instantly restrained.

[Nuguo~o! Let go!]

[I'll release you, just as you wished!]

Mikhail who was caught by the chain was flung by Doryukken, as he was freed the centrifugal force caused him to fly towards the ground. The centrifugal force caused by the heavyweight lump of iron was terrific, Mikhail was flung towards the ground like a meteorite.

At once, he set up a barrier of wind and escaped instant death, however it's likely that every bone in his body was crushed as he layed on his back without moving an inch. ~Gobog Gobo~ he coughed out blood.

Shia landed by his side.

Carrying Doryukken on her shoulder, she had compromised Mikhail. Mikhail while still faintly conscious, his vacant eyes turned to Shia. On his lips, due to being unable to bring down his enemy, or, due to the impossible situation of being completely annihilated despite having close to 100 subordinates, a smile of self-ridicule that even Mikhail himself didn't understand was shown. To be beaten down into this state, it's possible he could do nothing but laugh at himself.

To Shia who was looking down on him, Mikhail realizes his end. In his heart, he apologized to his dear fiancee that he couldn't take revenge, then he spoke his last words.

[....Goho～, this….goho～.....monster!]

[Fufu, Thank you very much!]

Mikhail's last retaliation seemed to only have made Shia more pleased.

At last, while watching absentmindedly as the hammer was swung down at his head, Mikhail thought that if there was an afterlife, he would go and search for Cattleya, he lost consciousness as he was thinking such dark things.

While carrying Doryukken after giving the final blow, Shia's cheeks are loosened because of Mikhail's final words.

[It seems that finally I've become strong enough to be called a monster….fufu, it seems I've become closer to Hajime and them. Now then, how about Yue-san's side…..]

Shia looked towards Yue's direction, they've been considerably distanced. And, even now she expected that she might still be able to give Freed one good hit, she began to dash out to join up with Yue.

Matchless Yue

The shining moon became invisible behind the crowd of ash dragons.

There's likely over 100 figures that could be seen. And at the center of it all is the white dragon, the appearance of Freed Bagua could be seen riding it's back.

[Don't think less of us. Dividing up the enemy forces is a standard technique in battles]

Shia and Mikhail had just disappeared into the transfer gate "Field Pierce" made through space magic. Then Freed ordered the black eagle force to pursue them, as they passed by they glared and trash talked Yue who was stationary.

Although there wasn't any signs of wind magic being used at all, to the appearance that floats in the skies just like the moon that floats in the nocturnal sky, a smile appeared even when their reactions were heard, Yue is only quietly staring at Freed expressionlessly.

Freed is a proud Majinzoku, rather than looking at others equally, they're looked down upon. He is a pious believer in their Majinzoku God whom they worship, he's the type of man that would not accept any other way of life or values.

Hence, it was impossible that he would have an interest in a woman from another race. However, that Freed is now, while the ash dragons and his subordinates were still blocking the true moon, to the girl with a pretty face that shines just like the moon, felt charmed with the thoughts “It would be regrettable if such a gem were killed”.

With those thoughts, although he understands it’s necessary to kill Hajime, and though he holds hatred because his brethren were killed, still, foolish words came out of his mouth.

[How regrettable. …..Woman, as a spellcaster, no matter how much I want the ability to cast magic without chants, though this may be reckless in this situation. How about it? Will you join me? We won’t treat you badly just because you’re a woman]

Towards Freed’s invitation, Yue’s reply was….

[.....Fu~, come back after being reborn. Ugly man]

It was indescribably severe, a reply of severe sarcasm mixed with ridicule was returned.

By the way, it wouldn’t be an exaggeration that Freed’s figure if evaluated by ten people, every one of them would agree that he was a good-looking man. Combined with his vast powers, he was extremely popular to the Majinzoku women. Therefore, he’s not an ugly man at all.

However, Yue saw Freed's desolate expression at the [Mountain of Great Flames] when he talked about his god, in her memory it was awful and sickening. Such a man, invited her with a clarified face. The only thing seen was already just a sickening foolish man. To begin with, she doesn't feel anything for any other man but Hajime, so it was nothing but foolish talk to begin with.

When Yue's response was heard, Freed's eyes twitched and cramped up.

[Have you chosen your path as a martyr? Or, because of your loyalty to this country? Discard your teachings, do not simply follow a country in blind faith, do you plan on sacrificing your life for those kinds of things? That is the highest reaches of stupidity. Once you know of our god, "Aruvu-sama's" teachings. Then, you'll be purified after just closing your eyes just once!?]

To Freed who began blabbering on about unrelated topics, Yue simply answered by rapidly firing out Wind Blades. It was merely because she couldn't endure hearing him babble on any longer.

A spray of blood dances on the evening winds. Because Freed managed to dodge his body, the Wind Blades that Yue shot out only managed to cut his shoulder shallowly. Immediately, Freed was able to react to the Wind Blades, he was definitely one of the few great people who conquered a labyrinth. If not, he would have lost an arm immediately.

To Freed who was glaring at her with anger, Yue only returned it with a cool gaze. Then, she announced to the foolish looking demon leader.

[.....Your question is unnecessary. The moment you hurt Hajime, you were already sentenced to death in agony]

As if the words were a signal, extremely cold ice and snow blew around Yue.

It instantly turned into a huge tornado, it climbed up towards the heavens as it surrounded Yue. A white storm which connected the heavens to the ground, the surrounding temperature is quickly reduced to absolute zero, the ash dragons which were blocking the moon were completely frozen.

This was a compound magic of ice at a superlative degree in the system attack magic “Frozen Prison” along with the intermediate wind system attack magic “Storm Emperor” which created a wide range tornado at absolute zero temperatures.

Almost like a mammoth being frozen instantaneously due to the climate change that brought upon the glacial epoch, the ash dragons all died without damage to their exterior, they fell and crashed onto the ground, breaking their bodies into pieces. It appears that their insides were completely frozen as red crystals of blood bounced around on the earth.

[Did you not hear me. ……Guess there’s no helping it. Shoot her down!]

Freed who lost nearly 20 ash dragons instantly, ordered the attack

while gritting his teeth. As a result, the ash dragons all deploy together from all directions, top and bottom, they shot out aurora's disorderly from every direction.

As if they were meteor showers, over 100 aurora's were shot out in the night sky. The dark night was torn up by the flash of lights, as if the spellcaster in the center was committing suicide, an absolute zero blizzard blew out and raged like a flower pinholder.

From the impact of the countless auroras, the tornado of ice and snow dispersed as if melting in the air. The scattered ice and snow created a spiral, what appeared from the center was the appearance of Yue who was wounded from the powerful blast….actually no, it was an unhurt Yue accompanied by the black swirling star which circled around her.

Without wasting a second, over 100 aurora's were once again seen after they confirmed the small enemy was still there.

However, the matchless lights of death which would normally eliminate everything, one after another is swallowed into the black star that was tossed around by Yue, or bent and reflected outwards towards the horizon, none of them reached her at all.

Yue used gravity magic to further increase her altitude. While being exposed to countless auroras, there is no unrest in her expression at all. "Exceeding Curse" was used to swallow up everything and "Cursed Sky" was used to move the ball of extreme gravity, as if it were a protection satellite orbiting and defending the moon.

[The breaths are uneffective, directly swat her down! Go!]

To Freed's change of strategy, the ash dragons didn't lag behind at all and followed the orders obediently. While releasing the roar of a dragon, murderous intent was shown in its eyes from wanting to tear up the slender girl with its sharp claws and teeth.

They intended to attack in waves. Yue's environment was immediately buried under the gray crowd of ash dragons.

Yue who was being confronted didn't worry at all at the incoming ash dragon's murderous intent, she calmly closed her eyes. While deeply concentrating. It could be said that it was convenient for the ash dragons that she wasn't moving, their claws expand, and their strong jaws spread open.

At the moment where they thought that it would be impossible to escape death, while facing them, Yue's eyes opened up! And then, her lovely thin lips voiced out.

["Beheading Threads*I think? 斬羅*(cut)"]

At that moment, their world shifted in unison (. . .).

Like a mirror which had cracked, countless lines are drawn out in the open space, the lines were purposely made adjacent to the starting point. And then, the ash dragons which were coming in succession into the cracked space, after stiffening for an instant, fell

to the ground while hearing the sound of their scattering and spraying blood from their cut body parts that came into contact with the broken space.

Space magic “Beheading Threads”. Through cracking space and moving it, it’s a no brainer that it’s a magic that will cut apart any object.

By Yue’s unseeable cutting magic, more than 30 ash dragons died without being able to do anything but scream out their last moments. Freed’s expression trembles from the activation of space magic, motion speed, and development scale that were far from what he could do.

[What great ability. ….By chance, are you one of the people chosen by God! If that’s so, then you’re rejection of my proposal is understandable]

Freed sweats a good amount while nodding in consent, Yue, [This misunderstanding imbecile, it’s extremely sickening though….], anyone could understand that she had an unpleasant expression.

[……What a joke. Whenever I fight, it’s always for Hajime’s sake. Don’t place me in the same group as you]

Towards the harsh words, Freed whose personality holds the gods in high esteem, love and respect, (he couldn’t imagine it) and became expressionless. It appears that mentioning that was taboo for Freed.

[Rejoice. I won't be saying anymore than this. We'll kill you and I will throw your corpse in front of that man. If I step on it, it may provoke some unrest. At that time, it would be that man's end]

[....That mouth sure runs a lot. Can't you just show it through your actions while being silent? Ugly man]

Towards the words that subdued his angry rant, multiple veins showed on Freed as he was ridiculed. Just as Yue had said, he decided to show it with actions.

But it was already seen at [Mountain of Great Flames], Freed issued instructions to a small bird-type demon that rode on his shoulder. Then, a part of the crowds of demons that had invaded and broke the outer wall of the Kingdom's capital, surged towards Yue from the ground. It appears that they intend to attack from the ground.

Yue, while protecting herself from the ash dragon's auroras with her gravity ball, summoned the "Thunder Dragon". The golden dragon appeared from the dark clouds in the sky and let out a roar of lightning. It approached as the auroras from the ash dragons and Freed were being restrained by "Exceeding Curse", the thunder dragon was then sent to wipe out the ground troops.

As usual, it was a no brainer that the thunder dragon's mouth sucked in everything…..was what was supposed to happen, but the advance was stopped by 6 pairs of turtle-typed demon Abusodo*<- The demon-type's name, maybe it means something? アブソド* that exceeded 5 meters in length. One of the huge Abusodos opened its big mouth and in reverse, actually started consuming the dragon instead.

Abusodo was also seen before with the Majinzoku woman named Cattleya at [Orcus Great Labyrinth], it's a demon whose inherent magic is able to take in other magic into its body. However, the Abusodo that was consuming the thunder dragon on the ground was a different size from the Abusodo seen in the labyrinth. Most likely, it was improved and strengthened.

Still, as expected of the thunder dragon. Though it's being swallowed by the Abusodo, with its large body, though slowly, it's surely lifting it up. It appears that the limitation of only being able to swallow one type of magic hasn't been changed yet. Even if the thunder is being swallowed, it cannot swallow the gravity magic.

The 6 Abusodos were gradually floating and they flailed around hastily, before their big bodies were carried off by the thunder dragon, another Abusodo began to swallow the gravity magic. As expected, the thunder dragon couldn't endured the 2 strengthened Abusodo's with their inherent magic "Magic Storing", the body of the thunder dragon was consumed.

Immediately after that, the compressed magic was launched at Yue.

[.....Annoying]

Just like an anti-aircraft homing missile was launched from the ground, it accurately attacked Yue. Yue who was using the gravity ball to the best of her abilities to block the ash dragons and white dragon's auroras, immediately evaded by "falling" from the sky.

[Fu~, I understood that you used strange thunder system magic. As long as Abusodo is here, your magic will be sealed off]

Freed laughs while grinning. However, Yue isn't particularly worried, only quietly observing the Abusodos, only after a short time, her eyes wandered in the sky while thinking something and then concentrated on them again.

[Are you trying to tear space again? I won't be giving you that kind of time!]

The white dragon and ash dragons further increased the severity of their attacks, a black panther typed demon approached by kicking off the ground and into the sky.

Although the storm of aurora's were blocked by the gravity ball, most of Yue's consciousness was used to construct another magic, her movements were lacking compared to before. There, the appearance of the black panther approached quickly from the ground, it began releasing countless tentacles*lol there always needs to be some kind of tentacle monster when against a girl*, furthermore, its sharp claws also bypassed the gravity ball which was focused on preventing the auroras from hitting.

Between offense and defense, countless wounds appear on Yue's body, red blood splashes in the night sky. However, because it was only a flesh wound, it wasn't much of a problem. To begin with what is Yue's true defensive powers, certainly not barriers nor gravity balls. It was the cheating "Regeneration Power".

A barrier would be placed if there was a companion, or evaded if the attack will cause clothes to tear because it would be a nuisance, originally she would just disregard the other parties attacks and leave it up to her regeneration powers, Yue's true battle style was simply, one-sidedly attacking.

To Yue who was spraying blood, Freed's expression was that of one who was convinced of their victory, when Yue's wound was automatically restored, his eyes could only open widely in astonishment.

[Is that also an Age of God's magic? Just exactly how many have you acquired!]

Although he wasn't completely wrong, while voicing out his misunderstanding to Yue, he gave out orders for all demons to continue attacking until they beat her recovery rate. And then, Freed also started chanting an Age of God's magic.

However, naturally, Yue was already concentrating on her magic previously. Yue's eyes opened up and showed strength, in the space of the thundering roars and flashes, her lovely voice resounded.

["Five Heavenly Dragons"]

Immediately afterwards, dark clouds appear and the thunder roared, the swirling wind turns into a storm and blew harshly, the water currents produced were frozen into ice, a gray cloud of sand took shape like a big snake, and flames strong enough to burn up the atmosphere were condensed.

As a result, the appearance of 5 demonic dragons were seen in the night sky of the Kingdom's capital. Although they were dragons created from gravity magic, they all had their own respective attributes.

Gooaaaaaa～!!!

The 5 dragons roared out greatly enough to make the atmosphere tremble.

The group of gigantic demonic dragons looked divine, the ash dragons probably realized on instinct that they were greatly outmatched and leaked out a small miserable cry in their fright. In their eyes, there's already little to no murderous intent towards Yue, instead fear and shock settled in its place, their eyes glanced over to their master Freed, demanding for help.

Freed once again exposed his disgraceful behavior of having his jaw drop down from the magic that lacked common sense while riding the white dragon. That chance wasn't missed, Yue sent the 5 heavenly dragons to assault the ground troops.

The thunder dragon charged at Abusodo and swallowed it first, Abusodo put up a fight and opened its large mouth as well. Although the thunder dragon was slightly consumed, it was different from a while ago, the blue* <-I think this is supposed to actually be the flame one but no matter what i do, i get blue lol, 蒼龍* dragon dashed out from behind the thunder dragon, when they both collided together, Abusodo melted due to the intense heat.

[Kuaaaaaan~!!]

The pain generated from its shell melting down while still alive caused Abusodo to cry out painfully as its inherent magic was completely bested, the thunder dragon then aimed at another target. It was, another Abusodo that was swallowed by the storm dragon. While letting out a godly roar, it bit into the other dragon where Abusodo was, the edge of its body transformed into ash from being scorched.

Again at a nearby place, the ice dragon is freezing Abusodo and the stone dragon rolled up and caused all surrounding areas to petrify. The storm dragon which was freed by the thunder dragon, advanced onwards and cut the demons such as the black panthers besides Abusodo into pieces.

As expected, using the 5 heavenly dragons was harsh, Yue was panting and her forehead was drenched in sweat. After quickly disposing of the Abusodos, her next target were the ash dragons in the sky.

Freed's group of matchless dragons were similarly challenged by Yue and her dragons. Without a doubt the figures of the ash dragons becoming food to the 5 heavenly dragons could be seen, this seemed to just show the difference in ability between Yue and Freed.

Freed finally realized after coming this far. The shape of a terrible monster which would normally be avoided. It was not just the boy who took heavy damage from the surprise attack at [Mountain of

Great Flames], but also the girl in front of his eyes, she was without a doubt someone that he had to risk his life against when fighting.

He was ashamed at himself for becoming arrogant for saying what he had said before the fight.

Therefore, this next magic attack is literally with all of Freed's energy put into it.

[----------World which is always swaying, giant's iron hammer, roar of the dragons, Army of trampling legs, both worlds are never met, hearing rumbles, bringing screams, It's God's sigh! It's God's grief! Thou, be crushed with despair! "Trembling Heaven"!]

The surrounding space rumbles intensely. Sounding lower than a hungry bellies groan, as if the world itself was screaming.

Yue's thoughts, [Mu~!] her cautiousness intensifies as she has knowledge of this magic, a defensive system was immediately thought up. The range of the blast magic was far too wide to evade in time. And all average defenses would be completely broken in an instant.

After canceling the 5 heavenly dragons and the gravity ball, she immediately constructed space magic. This is because she has no room to spare resources on other magics. Yue with the quick use of space magic and simultaneously, the space shrunk momentarily and caused a great explosion.

Space itself exploded. Without a doubt, it was had great force, even the leftover ground troops and ash dragons were obliterated in an instant, it gouged out the earth and even blew away all clouds within the area.

Space magic “Trembling Heaven”. Space is forcefully compressed, it’s a magic that generates an extremely powerful impact from letting loose the compressed space.

[.....N～, as expected….of Age of God’s magic]

However, Yue had survived even though she was at the center of the impact. Her clothes were torn in some places, blood dripped from her mouth, some of her internal organs were probably damaged, however it was all too light compared to the impact that went off.

Her slight injuries were also quickly healed.

Normally, it had enough power to completely wipe out everything without a trace……

The reason was because Yue had used the space magic “Restraining Threads*I think? 縛羅*” before “Trembling Heaven” activated. This was a magic that restores space. In use, it was an convenient magic that could be used for defense and restraining. More so, it’s magic consumption wasn’t at the point of wanting to tear out the whites of ones own eyes out.

The space wasn't completely restored because it was instantaneously created, though Yue took some damage, other than physical restoration from "Automatic Reproduction", her clothes were also restored through reproduction magic, her appearance in both the inside and outside were flawless.

At the center of where everything in the surroundings were destroyed, a figure was seen bathing in the moonlight as if nothing had happened at all, it was an amazing combination of divineness and strength.

However, there was one person who didn't doubt Yue's strength. He assaulted Yue from a blind spot.

[I knew you would withstand it! Monster disguised as a girl!]

Passing through the gate behind Yue, Freed who rode on the white dragon appeared while shooting out an aurora.

Though Yue evaded the aurora by immediately "falling", she could not dodge the white dragon's opened mouth as they intersected, it tried to devour her arm from the shoulder down in one go.

Bushu~! blood gushes out from the wound. The white dragon was unable to completely tear off Yue's arm, when its sharp fangs sank down onto her soft skin, it tried to shoot out an aurora at point blank.

It seemed to be improvised as Freed continuously shot out great magics, this time he was once again convinced of his victory, he turned to look at Yue in delight. However, the moment he saw Yue's expression, an unspeakable chill ran through Freed's spine, his eyes full of delight turned into fear.

Because, on Yue's lips was a smile in the shape of a perfect crescent moon. Her thin pink lips easily stood out. The smile no longer showed the divineness that was shown awhile ago. The moonlight which shined on Yue, changed into one not of solemnity, but one of devilishness.

Through the night wind, deep red eyes shining brightly between the gaps of her beautiful gold hair could be seen.

In other words

-------You touched me?

and.

The chant of the Age of God's magic was quietly voiced from Yue's mouth.

["Destruction Engraving"*I think? 壊刻*]

Immediately afterwards, in the night sky where the devilish moonlight pours down, the scream of two were simultaneously heard.

[Guuaaaaa～!!]

Kuuruaaan～!!

The white dragon writhed from the impact, this time Yue's arm was completely torn off, However, she didn't have an anxious expression and manipulated gravity magic to go up into the sky. And, in an instant, the appearance of the missing arm returned, she then glared at Freed and the white dragon that was in agony while gushing blood from their whole bodies.

[……How is it? The same wounds that Hajime received. Does it hurt?]

[Guuu～! Damn you, this…..]

To Yue who was expressionless and shouldering the moon on her back, Freed grit his teeth in fierce pain and glared sharply back.

Freed and the white dragon's states were severe. The white dragon suffered a hollowed chest through combustion, in addition it was bleeding throughout its entire body, it seemed that it would crash at any moment. As for Freed, he was bleeding slowly from an incision wound on his chest, his left arm was broken and lowered lifelessly, and he was coughing out blood intensely as his internal organs were damaged. In addition there were big and small

wounds throughout his whole body.

All of the wounds were the same as the time where Hajime was injured at [Mountain of Great Flames]. Reproduction magic “Destruction Engraving”--------a magic that reproduces the wounds and destruction that an object once received in the past. Although not direct nor indirect, if it’s not touched within a radius of less than 3 meters it wouldn’t work, the wounds that can be reproduced is proportional to the magic power being used.

Yue if possible, wanted to corner Freed with this magic. This fight was personal revenge from Yue to the end. At the [Mountain of Great Flames], her lover was greatly injured and anger took root in her heart, unable to escape unless revenge was carried out. Since then, [……The next time we meet, I’ll definitely beat the hell out of him], she promised.

And when she obtained the reproduction magic at [Merujine*pronounced Merujeene* Undersea Ruins], while remembering the events at [Mountain of Great Flames], now that she could, she intended to use “Destruction Engraving” on him. Yue’s “Yan*as in Yandere*” whispered out so there was no helping it.

However, Yue was weak in close combat. it would be futile as she wouldn’t be able to activate the magic in time before Freed and his white dragon which flew away at high speeds before they could touch. Therefore, she thought she’d have to substantially damage the enemy before she could use it but…..Freed and them purposely touched her instead. There was no helping it that she unintentionally leaked out a smile. To Hajime’s enemies, her mind cannot stop the “Yan Yan”.

[……The me right now…..does it mean I wasn't chosen to be the victor this day. ……I was unprepared*I think, something about his resolution*]

[……I wouldn't let you]

Freed guessed that it was checkmate and grits his teeth, at the time when Yue was about to deal the finishing blow, waves of attack magic that shot from the ground were aimed at Yue.

[Freed-sama! Please pull out at once!]

[We will buy time!]

They were the ground troops that had gone to invade the Kingdom's capital. They seemed to have guessed that Freed was in a predicament and came to rescue him.

[You guys! ….Ku, sorry!]

The Majinzoku's that came to the rescue, after seeing Freed and the white dragon covered in wounds, their eyes borne hatred, they carried out suicide attacks without thinking about defending at all. Naturally, there's no way they could kill Yue with just enthusiasm. However, it seems that the very limited time earned was enough for Freed to open a gate.

Immediately before the flame spear that Yue shot could pierce

Freed and his white dragon, they both jumped into the gate and disappeared.

[.....Obstructed]

Yue after Freed successfully ran away, still, [You dare do that to Freed-sama!], coldly looked down at the Majinzoku who attacked repeatedly while yelling the same thing, the space magic “Trembling Heaven” that Freed used awhile ago was used once again. Although Yue completely annihilated their snarling feelings in an instant, you could see some irritation on her expression. Her pent-up anger wasn’t cleared.

While Yue was taking deep breaths to calm herself, an unbecoming bright voice resounded on the battlefield.

[Yue-sa～n! Is that guy still alive? If he’s alive, let me hit him once……uwa～a what happened here? Was there a natural disaster?]

Shia’s usamimi’s*＜-rabbit ears* waved as she jumped to the floating disk and asked while looking at the surroundings with an amazed voice.

[.....Fled]

Shia understood roughly what went on from that single phrase, while being slightly surprised at Freed’s unexpected tenacity, she

soothed Yue with a wry smile.

And while waiting to replenish their magical powers, they exchanged their information, then an explosion occurred in the corner of the royal palace, following that, a huge pillar of light poured down from the sky, an impossible scene of the large army of demons consisting of tens of thousands that were outside of the outer walls were completely obliterated, then they looked at one another.

[[……Hajime (San)]]

The two answered at the exact same time.

[……For the time being, should we go to the royal palace?]

[……N]

Shia and Yue concluded that the perpetrator of the lack of commonsense was Hajime, they smiled as they glanced at the huge crater where the demons had vanished, together, the two went to the royal palace where Hajime would be.

God’s Apostle, Nointo

Silver wings fluttered under the moonlight.

However, it was not to fly. It was to shoot out magic bullets made out of silver feathers which leaked out murderous intent from the silver wings. The magic bullets of silver held terrifying power along with the ability to continuously fire at will, the darkness was torn up in the sky 8,000 meters above ground, and a great number of flashes of light pours onto it’s target.

What stood up against it was a steel weapon which sparked out bright red light. Everytime the monster who crushed all his foes released a roar, the silver feathers that came flying in would scatter tragically and disperse. Although they were well calculated trajectory shots, it’s meaningless if they all get knocked down in one blow, a hole was created in the barrage which could be mistaken as a wall. What was needed was the courage to progress. That was how the perfect evasion was carried out.

[Hiyaa～!]

An out of place lovely voice resounded from the situation which gambled their lives. It was Hatanaka Aiko-sensei who couldn’t endure any longer and released an improper voice. Hajime used Metsurai*his machinegun* to shoot down the large barrage of silver feathers that “God’s Apostle” Nointo shot, Aiko was being held by his right arm and he continued to dodge at the very last second. She experienced her first dogfight in her life (Flesh and Blood version).

[Sensei! Keep your mouth closed! You'll bleed like crazy if you bite yourself!]

[Even if you tell me tha-aa!? I, I bit myself……]

Hajime's advice was in vain, Aiko immediately had tears in her eyes. Actually no, she already had tears in her eyes at the start of the air battle, so it wasn't only because she bit herself.

Hajime as well, because Aiko doesn't particularly have high physical strength, in order to avoid using intense movements he used "Light Speed*remember he uses it to slow down time and accelerate his thinking process*", he knocked down the oncoming barrage and dodged with minimum movements, however the movements were still more intense than a roller coaster, Aiko was already in a groggy state.

However he couldn't just go ahead and toss her away either. Nointo's merciless attack gave no room for Hajime who was holding Aiko to do that, plus as soon as he threw her, the attacks would likely be aimed at Aiko. Fighting with Aiko behind him could work, however moving together while holding her would be the better choice.

Besides, this situation won't be continuing forever. A reliable companion should be coming to their rescue soon. Hajime used Schlag to shoot down the silver feathers which surrounded them from all directions while evading, Hajime spoke to Aiko who had shut her eyes tightly and was clinging tightly onto him.

[Sensei, hold on for just a bit longer. Right now my companion is heading here. When that fellow gets here, you'll be able to get to the ground]

[Al, alright! But, what about you!?]

[Of course, I'm gonna kill that arrogant person]

[U~u, I'm sorry for holding you back….]

While grinding her teeth, she was aware that she was literally extra baggage. Hajime embraced Aiko closely and performed a somersault. In the inverted world, the silver bombardment passed over Hajime's head. The flash of light erased the upper part of the isolation tower which Aiko had previously been held captive.

Again, a shriek was let out, however it was drowned out by the shockwaves, while pressed onto Hajime's chest, his heartbeat could be heard and wasn't erratic at all, Aiko understood and obtained a strange sense of security from hearing it. Really, what am I thinking about in this situation, she rebutted herself however she gave in and clung onto Hajime with even more strength.

[Don't worry about it. I've expected an unreasonable situation since the beginning]

[! Wa, you'd go that far……just for me…..]

Of course, Hajime meant that in the sense of colliding against the church for the Age of God's magic, not in the sense of helping Aiko…..Just that, Aiko who was drunk from the situation splendidly misunderstood its meaning. And, in a situation where she was being embraced and protected further increased her misunderstanding. It's necessary that she wake up quickly.

[.....So you still have room to talk, irregular]

[Nuguo～o!?]

Immediately after the exchange of silver bombardments and barrage of silver feathers, a mechanically cold voice sounded out within striking distance of Hajime's side. At once, he used his artificial arm to shoot out behind himself from the elbow, he also used the recoil to turn himself around. What jumped into his eyes was, one large sword used to defend the attack, and the other large sword was swung sideways. The large sword was 2 meters in length, 30 centimeters in width, and cladded in silver light, just being there was enough to make you feel a sense of overwhelming intimidation being released from it. And, its ability that it bears is also quite merciless. After all, it was clad in the silver inherent magic "Decomposition" that Nointo used. It would be against the rules to even touch it.

However, even if he knew that, he couldn't perform any unreasonable movements because Aiko was still there, Hajime immediately used Schlag to hit the center of the large sword to divert its trajectory and allowed himself to fall back backwards, with that he just barely managed to dodge it. The large sword passed by and grazed his bangs which caused him to break out in cold sweat.

He instantaneously used his artificial arm, Schlag, and "Vajra", the azanthium managed to hold off against the "Decomposition" but, it's inevitable that it would take damage every time they came into contact. This time around, Schalg's surface was scraped down slightly. If the same thing is done over and over again, it'll probably be destroyed quite fast.

Nointo didn't stop the centrifugal force caused by the large sword, while rotating the moonlight was reflected and caused her silver hair to glitter beautifully, she then turned to Hajime and brought down her sword that she used to block the bullets. With immense power the speed of the sword already far exceeded the commonsense of its large frame.

Once again, Hajime shot out a shell from his artificial arm to fend off the large sword and used it's recoil to rotate, he then pointed Schlag's muzzle at Nointo and pulled the trigger 3 times. Three flashes of light roared out as they headed towards Nointo's heart, he accurately shot them towards her abdomen.

However, Nointo's reaction speed wasn't normal either. She had already held up her large sword to protect her stomach the moment Hajime aimed his gun.

Hajime then used the cross bitt's to pursue Nointo who was distanced due to the power of the railguns. The loaded exploding slug bullets gave out a wave of bright red ripples in the night sky and a created a terrifying shockwave. Although Nointo managed to easily negate it with her silver wings, just as Hajime planned it out, they were distanced from one another.

[Hawa, hawawa…..what, how did….]

[…..Sensei. I'm begging you, while we're still trying to kill each other please don't release such cute sounds. It's like it'll ruin the mood?]

[C, cute….Nagumo-kun! Wh, what are you saying to your sensei…..]

They were in a super high grade battle where victory or defeat could be settled in the matter of seconds, however Aiko's cute screams would be heard in intervals, Hajime's vigor was being cut down each time. [You're surprisingly comfortable while being protected?*I think? この人案外余裕なんじゃなかろうな?*] was said while looking at them suspiciously, actually half of that was correct, Aiko had never thought in her wildest dreams that she would feel so secure while being embraced by Hajime.

[.....Even while holding extra baggage, in order to overpower you…..as expected, you are too strong. You're not a suitable piece for my masters]

[Well, im glad. Finally aggravating the Neets, being called an unneeded nuisance and unqualified piece is of the highest evaluation. Thanks a lot]

[.....It's useless if you're trying to make me angry. I have no emotions]

[Ha? What are you saying? Those were obviously my real feelings]

[.....]

Nointo expanded her wings and steeled her eyes then posed her twin swords in a cross. As she said, there really were no feelings, was it just a useless conversation then…..in Hajime's eyes, some anger began to swell up, his useless thoughts were then omitted immediately. Anyhow, he'll still kill her. No matter what he thinks of Nointo, in the end it's a trivial thing.

Nointo's silver wings began to flutter again, the silver feathers were released and scattered in the sky. However, this time it wasn't shot at Hajime. Instead, they gathered around Nointo in an instant, several silver feathers were piled up on top and overlapping each other. Right, it was a magic formation. The magic formation

glowed out silver lights and Nointo glared at Hajime.

And…..

[“Disastrous Flame Wave”*I think? 劫火浪*]

The magic that was used created a huge tsunami of fire that scorched up the sky.

It appears that she was able to not only use magic bullets, but also attribute magic. Though she’s never used it up till now, it was because she judged that silver magic bullets would be enough. In other words, she’s become serious.

The huge wave of flames raised up and down and completely towered over their heads, towards the extraordinary waves of flames, Aiko momentarily sees an illusion that the world was engulfed in great flames. She glanced up at Hajime from his chest, he was searching desperately for something and sweat could be seen on his cheeks.

What Hajime was looking for was the core of the magic. If he can find it with his Magic Eye, he can make the whole thing disappear as long as he shoots through it. Of course, it would take god-like pin-point accuracy to shoot through a needle-like hole, but for Hajime it was already a normal skill.

However, the magic that Nointo used was a super-wide-ranged

magic, it was large enough to completely illuminate [Kamiyama] which could be comparable to daytime. It was like searching for a needle in an ocean, the position of the core was unknown.

And, the time limit ended without mercy.

The tsunami of flames that reached several hundred meters completely swallowed Hajime and Aiko without letting them escape. It was checkmate no matter how anyone looks at it. It would be normal to assume that the 2 people were completely burnt down and left no traces at all.

However, Nointo didn't look away from the center of the great flames that burned brightly.

[.....Will you also surpass this]

Immediately after Nointo muttered that, the attacks effects ended, at the center of the great flames, Hajime and Aiko were flawlessly enclosed by 4 cross bitts.

With Hajime and Aiko at the center, the 4 cross bitts created a triangular pyramid and connected with one another through wires. A film of bright red light stretched in between the field where the wires connected.

[It's still only in its experimental stage but…..it seems to have worked quite well]

[Th, this is…..]

Hajime's slightly relieved expression could be seen. This was possible because the wire and ore's which carried space magic through generation magic were built into the cross bitts, when four points were united a boxed-type barrier would be formed. It's not just a simple barrier though, it's the type that shuts out space itself, theoretically, its defensive powers were guaranteed. However, it was still in the experimental stages, because there was no solid proof on how much it could actually endure, Hajime was slightly uneasy for a moment.

Nointo looked at the barrier in amazement and saw Aiko who was still embraced being restless, once again she formed another magic formation.

But, there were more than 20 magic formations this time, their forms unfolded as silver feathers were shot towards Hajime simultaneously.

It was exactly like an attack of angry waves. Most likely, although the four point barrier might demonstrate considerable strength, it would be a problem for those inside of it to be caged in. moreover, it's uncertain if it could endure Nointo's waves of all out attacks.

The bad side of this barrier was that Hajime could not attack while enclosed because space itself is cut off. Therefore, Hajime quickly released the barrier and distanced himself greatly away from Nointo, he tried to devote himself to evading until Teio arrived.

Then suddenly at that time, a song began to resound throughout [Kamiyama].

Hajime looked at where the singing was coming from as he dodged the silver feathers, there, he saw a gathering of church priests, their hands were crossed in a prayer pose and they continued singing. The chorus consisted of 100 priests gave out a solemnity feel to it, just like those that you'd be able to see at Earth.

Just what, immediately after Hajime questioned himself,

[....~!? What's this? My body is.....]

[Nagumo-kun!? Au~, wh, what is this.....]

Hajime and Aiko's bodies felt weird.

Strength couldn't be found in their bodies and their magic powers were quickly diminishing. It was as if all their energy were being sapped out of their bodies. Moreover, particles of light began to cling on them and their movements became more obstructed.

[Ku, a magic that causes an abnormal state.....as expected of the head temple. Their measures against enemies are perfect]

Hajime's guess was right on target.

Ishtar and them noticed that Nointo, “God’s True Apostle”, was fighting and supported her with the “Hymn of Supreme Degeneration*I think? 覇堕の聖歌*” magic. This was a brutal magic which weakened the enemies and restrains them as well, it was an irregular magic which could only be sustained if continuously sanged by multiple priests at once.

[Ishtar huh. ……He seems to understand his duties well. Quite a good piece]

Ishtar was looking at Nointo with an ecstatic expression from the ground and Nointo looked back at him with eyes that showed no feelings. If you looked at Ishtar’s expression, you’d know right away that he wished to cooperate with Nointo and it seemed to also be the height of his lifetime. Certainly, it was a convenient existence that moved along with God’s will.

Ishtar and the other priests aside, currently, the magic invoked was definitely a troublesome one.

Hajime gradually lost his powers, while supplementing it with his huge magical powers, he managed to dodge Nointo’s attack. However, it was obvious that his reaction time was cut down drastically. And while continuing on with that body state, Nointo’s attacks weren’t letting up at all.

Several magic formations formed around Nointo and lightning bolts came dashing out, it rushed towards Hajime while drawing irregular movements in the sky. Hajime shot through the lightning bolts core with Schlag and they dispersed, however he couldn’t get rid of the electrified air caused by the lightning bolts and they got shocked a little.

Momentary stiffness. However, that was a fatal chance against Nointo.

[~!?]

Nointo moved in at super-speeds and crossed her twin swords together. Due to the momentary stiffness from the electric shock, Hajime's reaction was slightly delayed, he somehow managed to divert a blow away using Schlag but the second blade couldn't be avoided and it sanked into his shoulder.

[Guu~u!]

While raising a painful voice, he flipped his body by using the outburst from his artificial arm, while using "Aerodynamic" he desperately attempted to get outside of Nointo's sword range. Naturally, her severe sword attacks didn't allow him to have that much free time, he made the cross bitts self-destruct and managed to distance himself away from her.

[Nagumo-kun~!?]

[I'm alright so be quiet!]

Blood dripped down from Hajime's shoulder and onto Aiko's cheeks. From the shockwave that the cross bitts created, "Vajra" was used to defend themselves, although Aiko didn't get hit much by the impact, she desperately tried to keep her consciousness and raised a worried scream towards Hajime.

But, Hajime no longer had time to worry about Aiko. While replying coldly, Nointo began to shoot out silver feathers. Hajime used “Vajra”, “Air Claw”, and Schlag to bring them down. Because of the particles of light, his body felt sluggish, it wasn’t possible to evade everything after all.

Towards that kind of Hajime, Nointo charged forwards from the front…..was a feint and spread her silver wings! a light was emitted. The bright lights blinded Hajime’s sights.

However, Hajime’s perception ability was first class. Immediately, he felt Nointo’s presence behind him and turned Schlag around and rapidly fired. Consecutive explosions were heard, turning around…..he saw a bundle of silver feathers scattering around. Right, it was a decoy that Nointo made with a bundle of her silver feathers.

[～!?]

Hajime’s spine stood up straight. His instincts were ringing out loudly, warning him. Hajime regretted that he had turned around, he could only pull the trigger without properly aiming with his arm backwards.

Bullets were shot, and luckily enough it flew towards Nointo’s head, but she easily evaded by ducking her head. And, one of the large swords cut down onto Hajime’s back. Hajime used the derivation of “Vajra” which was “Intensive Strengthening*I think? 集中強化*” to the best of his abilities, he steeled himself in preparation.

Although Nointo's large sword was equal to Hajime's "Vajra" for an instant, the wall was immediately torn apart, the swords tip swung down onto Hajime's body.

[Gaa~a!!]

[Nagumo-kun!]

He felt pain burning on his back, Towards Hajime who instinctively leaked out his voice, Aiko's expression and voice were impatient. However, Hajime countered Nointo by somersaulting forwards from using the impact of the cut.

Nointo immediately pursues them with her sword held high.

Hajime whose body was sluggish placed "Vajra" onto a cross bitt to make it into a shield, other cross bitts were sent to the left and right of Nointo and released their built-in exploding bullets.

As Nointo rushes in she used her silver wings to brush off the bullets from the cross bitts, and used her large sword to cut down the cross bitt acting as Hajime's shield, furthermore, she flung her second sword onto the first one in order to devour the cross bitt, it easily cut through.

Hajime's eyes were opened wide, Nointo's eyes were literally right in front of his. Her eyes showed clearly that this was their difference. In other words, "This is the end".

Hajime's eyes showed no sign of giving up. However, in order to not let Aiko die in this situation, he needed to consider things. If it comes to it, Hajime decided that he would get hurt instead. In such cases, if he became too weakened, he'd have to regrettably use "Limit Breakthrough" without waiting for Teio to arrive, he prepared himself to sacrifice his left arm first.

And, against Nointo's large sword, Hajime's held up artificial left arm was torn into, the moment when it was about to break through and deal a fatal injury,

Guugaa~aaaaaaa!!!

Along with a dragons roar a black flash approached from beneath them with terrific power. It was a scorching breath which eliminates everything. The violent black storm was accurately aimed at Nointo.

Immediately, Nointo's silver wings wrapped around her body in a defensive stance.

Just after that, the black breath directly hit Nointo's wings, although it was being decomposed the force of the blow pushed her away. The black and silver magics collide with one another and caused black-silver magical powers to scatter in the air, Nointo was flung backwards into one of the churches towers. With the sound of the impact, the tower began rattling and crumbled down.

The screams of the priests led by Ishtar could be heard from underneath. They seemed to be upset because an apostle of God was blown off.

Hajime took out Orkan*his rocket launcher* from the “Treasure Warehouse” and without looking he shot all 12 rockets towards Ishtar’s group. This time around he ignored the different kind of screams being heard. Because another voice echoed and drowned out theirs.

“Master. Are you alright?”

Towards the voice, Hajime’s cheeks loosen up although he’s still on the lookout for Nointo. The arrival of the dragon that he was waiting for came.

[You saved me, Teio. It was a bit dangerous just then]

While happy because of Hajime’s words, the black dragon which was Teio was seen regaining steepness after bringing down the powerful enemy and came besides Hajime while fluttering her wings.

“I’m glad above all else that I made it on time, later chastise…….I want a reward”

[…….I’ll think about it if you manage to protect sensei]

“Really! Don’t go forgetting those words now! Sa～a, sensei-dono, you should get on mistress’s back”

Hajime, in such a situation Teio is still faithful to her own desires (In retrospect, Yue, Shia, and Kaori are too but,) with an amazed expression, Aiko who was embraced closely was put on her back.

Aiko somehow felt an odd sensation from the two’s conversation, she clung obediently on Teio’s back because now she won’t be weighing him down any longer.

[Ehtto, Teio-san. My best regards]

“Umu. Leave it to me. After all sensei is an important person to master (in the sense of a teacher), I won’t let you fall into enemy hands”

Aiko further increased her misunderstanding from the words “important person” that Teio said, and anxiously looked at Hajime. However you looked at it, it wasn’t the expression of anxiety that a teacher has towards a student, it was the air of a lady in love, however there wasn’t anyone there to tsukkomi.

And at that time, the tower which Nointo plunged into blew off from the ground with a roaring sound. A thick cloud of dust danced around and from the wind pressure of Nointo’s silver wings, it was all blown away and showed her unhurt form. Teio’s breath didn’t seem to be able to pierce through the silver wings defences.

[……Teio, go]

“Aye. However, I’ll come back to help after sensei-dono’s safety is secured? At the very least, mistress will do something about the people of the church”

Towards Hajime who was already staring at Nointo with intense blood thirst, Teio managed to guess awhile ago the cause of the magic which was weakening Hajime, she reliably declared while staring at Ishtar’s group. Hajime continued to focus on Nointo.

When those words were heard, Hajime simply nodded once and then charged fiercely towards Nointo through the air.

[Nagumo-kun! Be careful! Please…..]

“…….Fumu? Ho～o…well well…..”

Towards Aiko who was posed with both hands united in front of her chest praying, Teio seemed to have guessed what was going on and became interested, in other words she let out a, this is going to be interesting, voice.

“Sensei-dono. Though I understand you’re worried about master, I’m in a bit of a rush. I’ll send you onto the ground, then mistress will beat around the old damaged group over there. It wouldn’t do

for master to be obstructed after all”

Aiko said, wait, as Teio began to turn around. For what though, Teio glanced at Aiko who was on her back by bending her neck, Aiko returned the glance with a determined look.

[Teio-san. If you put me down on the ground now, wouldn’t having to come back after dropping me off take up quite a bit of time? This is 8,000 meters in the sky. Going back and forth should be quite harsh…..]

“Mu? Certainly, that’s absolutely right, but……sensei-dono, you can’t be thinking to”

[Yes. If Teio-san intends to fight for Nagumo-kun’s sake then, please allow me to help. If you don’t immediately do something about Ishtar-san’s group, Nagumo-kun would quickly weaken. It would be a waste of time to send me back down onto the ground]

What Aiko says is possible however honestly Teio is reluctant.

Although a lot of people seemed to have been injured by the Orkan’s attack, if you looked Ishtar is preparing to sing the hymn again while also constructing a barrier, Teio wanted to blow them all away as well. But, if by chance Aiko gets hurt, the promise with Hajime would disappear.

“But, it may be bad of me to say this to sensei-dono, but what can

you do? Without magic formations nor battle experience? Can you fight against the priests and their knights?”

Teio’s opinion was severe which caused Aiko to strongly grit her teeth and then she slowly moved her finger towards her mouth. And with her eyes closed, she bit and made a cut on her finger, the blood that dripped from her finger tip was used to draw magic formations by smearing it onto the back of her opposite hand.

[I, may not look like it but in terms of magical powers I’m equal to Amanogawa-kun who is the hero. Though I don’t have any battle experience……I’ll show you that I can properly assist you! Fighting against another person….honestly I’m scared, but I have no other choice but to do it. From now on, in order for everyone to survive and return to Japan, more than anyone else, I must not run away!]

The kingdom that was sceptical to invasion, even the king had become a fanatic like the priests. Relying on God who planned out everything in the first place is no longer an option. In order to survive in this world now, Aiko and them must continue advancing ahead.

If that’s so, as the teacher, even if she was avoided for it, what must be done, must be done. Teio understood from the determination in Aiko’s eyes, though she still hesitated, she decided to permit Aiko tagging along because there was no other way.

“Its inevitable if you’ve already made your final decision. If it’s Sensei-dono’s will, then Master wouldn’t have any complaints. As you wish. Shall we blow up those fools together!”

[Yes!]

Aiko’s tension and fear, and the answer which made up the decision that signaled their movements appeared, Teio flew towards the great church which symbolized the priests in a quick dash. Their enemies were the priests and temple knights which were made up of hundreds of people.

Now, a different tag team named Teio and Aiko challenged this worlds largest religious head temple.

The Angel That Fell

The first blow was with Schlagen.

A bright red spark gushed out, the bullet was shot out at super speeds that contained ferocious destructive power from the monsters weapon and straight towards it's target. The bombardment of bullets specialized in penetration which even pierced through Teio's breath from up front, as expected Nointo decided to evade rather than using decomposition from her silver wings to stop it.

She twisted her body as she fell and while she avoided the bright red flash which went over right above her head, she rushed at Hajime at a dreadful speed.

However, he read through her attack and had already placed cross bitts in the way, they fired exploding slug bullets and in the direct hit they released a roaring sound.

[~!?]

Nointo noticed the bright red ripples coming from the exploding slug bullets, did she consider that her silver wings wouldn't be in time, she used her large sword which she held in her hand to intercept them.

The large sword was swung at godlike speeds, it abruptly cut through the bullets into 2 as if they were butter. What was decomposed was the magic power that was inside of the exploding slug bullets though, however it wasn't possible for just a swing from a large sword to cut through everything, bullets were shot from both the left and right sides and shock waves were released.

Although it's power has decreased, Nointo was exposed to a direct shockwave and momentarily her movements stopped.

In front of her bosom was Hajime who closed the distance within that instant. By using quake legs in the air through use of "Aerodynamic", he began compressing power into his left arm, "Oscillation Pulverizer" and the mechanic "Bursting Shotgun", and with the full extent of his power "Impact Conversion" was poured into "Grand Arm" and the huge magic was released.

Nointo immediately used her 2 large swords as a shield. One of the large swords*At one point they started naming the swords but it was too much of a pain lol* was used to block the fist before the impact was fully released. She barely made it at the last second, she managed to stop Hajime's steel fist.

However, she wasn't able to suppress it's power, Gaa~aan! The colliding of metal resounded out with a terrible roar, Nointo was blown away by the intense force.

Dopaaaan~! Dopaaaan~!

Hajime didn't slack and continued his pursuit. Donner and Schlag

was immediately pulled out and fired at maximum power. 2 roaring explosions were heard. 2 bright red flashes tore through the dark night. However, Nointo crossed both her swords as she blew off to take on a defensive stance as there was going to be 12 impacts incoming.

[Kuuuu~!!]

For each attack that Donner and Schlag shot, the fast attacks were only heard as one attack, with super pin-point precision, every bullet landed in the same place. Simultaneously, Nointo groaned with every one of them, her large swords trembled from the impacts and ~Piki~ an unpleasant sound was slightly heard.

Hajime wondered to himself if he should feel amazed that the durability of the 2 large swords was able to withstand 12 railguns and his fist attack with his whole body put into it and still didn't break.

She was blown away even further, once again, Nointo was buried after destroying some facilities that were solemnly decorated by the church. Hajime took Orkan out of his "Treasure Warehouse" and launched all his rockets just in case.

Bashuuuuu~!!

The group of rockets lit off sparks and dealt fatal wounds onto the building which was on the verge of collapsing. The building collapsed completely along with a great explosion, it was wrapped up in great flames reaching 3,000 degrees celsius from the large

amount of tar being stored inside the rockets.

While looking at the great flames which dyed the night sky in red, Hajime still didn't loosen his guard yet. He reloaded rockets into Orkan from the "Treasure Warehouse", and once again, he took aim at the mountain of rubble that was burning brightly.

Then, at that moment,

[~, from below]

Right as Hajime jumped and looked down underneath him, the ground where he once stood at exploded before his eyes, Nointo flapped her silver wings and flew out of the hole. It appears that she managed to save herself from the rest of the assault by using magic to go underneath the ground.

A large amount of silver feathers were shot out like a machinegun and she also released her silver bombardment. They exchanged blows while swaying around like a blown leaf in the wind, She crossed her twin swords together and from the small gap, a sword attack came through from the side and was warded off by the rail gun*I think this sentence goes like this*. Then Hajime launched missiles at Nointo.

Nointo who understood Orkan's power by experiencing it with her body, flew away quickly while releasing silver lights to get away from the pursuing missiles. While she released silver feathers to intercept the missile, she also created magic formations to launch magic attacks in fierce waves towards Hajime.

countless missiles were shot out and explosive flames in full bloom rained down from the night sky, Hajime put Orkan away and immediately pulled out Donner and Schlag again. He quickly shot through the core of the magic attacks that were heading at him and Nointo similarly brought down all the missiles.

A small silence came from the intervals of the fierce aerial battle. Nointo and Hajime were facing eachother in the air.

[Na~a, I've got something I want to ask, will you hear me out for a bit?]

[.....What is it?]

The Ninozku invading the Kingdom's capital shouldn't be unknown to the church. He was one-sidedly attacked without being able to ask his questions, so a temporary truce was given because Nointo decided to listen, It was the perfect time for Hajime to continue talking.

[The things that are happening on the ground. At this rate wouldn't the Kingdom fall into ruins? Next is obviously, this [Kamiyama]. Rather than waste your time fighting me, shouldn't you be fighting the Majinzoku?]

Hajime stated a reasonable question, however, Nointo snorted through her nose conveying that it was a foolish question.

[If it comes to that then that'll probably be the conclusion for this era]

[The end. …..As I thought, "Ehito" only sees "humans" as another "person", we're only pieces for them to waste time on. ……By chance, the human beings were chosen for this era this time around? At the rate this is going, is Ehito on the Majinzoku God's side, or has he become their subordinate]

[……..If so what are you going to do about it?]

[No, I just thought I'd check up on the amount of credibility "The Liberator's" stories had? After all, to me, both sides are still just suspicious people]

Nointo's eyebrow twitches when she heard that her master was called a suspicious person. However, Hajime didn't worry about it and continued talking with a smile.

[Na~a, if I'm in the way why don't they just send me back to my former world? Also, the heroes as well, if the Kingdom is to be wiped out already wouldn't that mean that they didn't have much of a role at all?]

[Your request is rejected, Irregular]

[Can I hear the reason?]

[It's because the master wishes for it. The master desires your death, Irregular. Eliminating all difficulties, obtaining immense power and strong comrades…..and then, completely ruining the balance. My master absolutely wishes for your death. That's why, in a way that you'll suffer the most, lamenting your choices, then finally ending you while tasting regret and despair. To the maximum amount in order to give my master the highest delight possible. Ahh, about the heroes….there was quite an elaborate and interesting idea, rather the master's become very interested. Therefore, while you're still here as a piece, continue dancing

around to please my master.]

Hajime wasn't worried at all and agreed within his mind, he shrugged his shoulders as the answer was roughly what he expected it to be after hearing what Miredei Raisen had told them before. In other words, [Those fellows were certainly trash].

However, rather than himself, those last words made him anxious.

[……An interesting idea?]

[It's not necessary for you to know as you'll be dying very soon]

The talk had ended, Nointo immediately shot out countless magics and silver feathers to resume the battle.

More over, it's power was on a whole different dimension from a while ago. The power that a single feather had was roughly comparable to the railguns and every magic attack was near infinite levels of power. If you looked closely, every part of Nointo's body was clad in silver magic and it came with an overwhelming intimidation. It looked just like the "Limit Breakthrough" that Hajime and Kouki used.

[~!]

While holding his breath against the extreme waves of attacks that consisted of overwhelming power, Hajime held Metsurai in his

right hand and Schlagen in his left and continued to fight back. Metsurai roared and shot out 12,000 bullets per minute which completely negated the silver feathers and magic attacks, meanwhile Schlagen's bullets pierced through in a single-file line towards Nointo.

However, Nointo's movements while clad in the silver light was incomparable to what it was before. The moment Schlagen's bright red bombardment pierced through Nointo, her body vanished like haze and appeared several meters away.

Nointo had caused a mirage of afterimages due to her shear speed of dodging the bullet and her body continued to slightly blur as is.

Hajime "Read Ahead*I dono if this is supposed to actually be a skill or not however it was in quotes, if it is then I probably could have named it Foresight, 先読*" and used cross bitts to shoot exploding slug bullets, however once again they only shot through her afterimage. Nointo who completely disappeared ～Zazazazazaza～ created afterimages in the next instant and appeared behind Hajime. And like a spinning top, she swung her twin large swords and spun along with its centrifugal force that contained immense power.

[～!?]

Nointo's last movements far exceeded Hajime's perception with "Light Speed" active, it was a complete surprise attack. Though he just barely managed to lean his body back to avoid a direct hit, Schlagen which was used as a shield was cut into two. It's built-in energy discharged by accident and a huge explosion erupted in between Hajime and Nointo.

That momentarily caused Nointo to delay her pursuit. however it allowed Hajime enough time to counterattack. Hajime's body became clad in bright red magic. He had used "Limit Breakthrough".

Towards Nointo who was advancing, Hajime also advanced a step. Metsurai was no longer in his hands, instead he held onto Donner and Schlag. From that point on it was going to be super close combat.

[Tsuaaa~!!]

[Haaaaa~!!]

Immediately after Hajime dodged the half-swung large sword, both large swords were swung at his body with exquisite timing. Using Schlag he repelled one sword by shooting a railgun at its center and the other was deflected with the upperside of its barrel, Donner in his right hand was aimed directly at Nointo's heart. A bright red flash shot out but Nointo dodge while rotating and left an afterimage, with its momentum she swung her large swords with increased power.

In order to oppose the decomposition, Hajime applied a heavy concentration of "Intensive Strengthening" from "Vajra" onto Schlag which was several times it's normal density, rather than going against the full brunt of the attack he used Schlag to deflect the first sword upwards.

And towards the 2nd large sword that was swung horizontally, he

received it's blade with the muzzle while still clad in "Intensive Strengthening" from "Vajra" and fired as is. With a flash of light, an explosion sounded out and the 2nd large sword flew away.

They were both within point-blank distance and while dodging and diverting their opponents weapons, they forgot to breath as their fierce attacks continued without being able to deal a fatal blow.

[Ooooooooo~!!!]

[Haaaaaaaaa~!!!]

Unaware, Hajime and Nointo began to shout out.

One tendon or a nerve line, with just one misstep, death would settle in at the next moment. There was no time to pay attention to each others attacks, they only relied on their experiences and instincts while swinging their sword and firing their guns which shaved off their lives a little bit at a time.

The silver sword left a trail of light through the dark night and the bright red flash flew in all directions like blood spraying. If both attacks were being compared to the sun, their storm of attacks would be considered a flare. In one second, in order to continue surviving they dodge each others attacks and their speeds rose without bounds.

In proportion, if they were slightly grazed blood would be stain everywhere. Hajime had shallow cuts everywhere on his body, Nointo was dripping blood from where she was gouged.

Hajime and Nointo's abilities were equal. The way things were going, the battle of offense and defense was thought to continue on for eternity, however Hajime was being cornered. No, to be accurate, he was going to be corned.

Hajime had already understood. Because none of Nointo's magical power has been consumed since the start of the battle.

Needless to say, Hajime had a time limit on using "Limit Breakthrough". It'll forcefully cancel itself and leave him in a weakened state for a while. Although Hajime's magical power was huge, it wouldn't be able to keep up indefinitely.

On the other hand, Nointo was apparently gaining a supply of magical power from somewhere else which allowed her to continue her strengthening and was virtually unrestricted. Hajime's Magic Eye was shining brightly, he was able to see that something similar to a magic stone was lodged into nointo's heart.

Hajime decided that if things stayed the way they were, he'd gradually be beaten.

[Be blown away~!]

Dodododododo!!!!

Simultaneously with the shout, Hajime had the cross bitts fire exploding slug bullets while he was still within the blasts vicinity.

[Have you gone mad]

Nointo's inorganic eyes slightly opened widely. Her eyes carried a color of doubt which questioned Hajime's sanity.

Dozens of exploding slug bullets were shot out by the 6 cross bitts immediately and made countless ripples centering around Hajime and Nointo. Nointo wrapped her silver wings around her body at once and Hajime also used "Vajra" to its maximum output.

Zudooooooooooon~!!!!!!

Immediately following that, a bright red flower of light bloomed above in the night sky. Needless to say, the immense shockwave blew away Hajime and Nointo.

It was a terrifying shockwave, it pierced through "Vajra" and caused quite a bit of damage to Hajime's body. As evidence, Hajime was grandly spraying blood everywhere. He was covered in wounds.

Nointo didn't get away free of harm either, because she couldn't wrap herself on time, she was also gushing with wounds and she coughed out blood as well. It seems that the impact reached her internal organs.

[……Were you going for a double suicide?]

[Ha～a, Ha～a…..suiciding with you? Ha, that's a harsh joke. Only say those lines if you're a good woman and my lover]

Nointo unintentionally had eyes of doubt from the rash attack, Hajime replied jokingly while breathing roughly. It had a hint of ridicule for wanting to be together with her as a friend for their last moments*Improvised don't actually get this sentence, お前ごときが誰かと最後を共に出来ると思うなという嘲笑混じりで*.

Hajime then took out a new weapon from the "Treasure Warehouse". And then he threw out cards which flew at high speeds.

Soundlessly, you would likely lose sight of it if you weren't paying attention even though it should be there, However, Nointo hit them away as if they were nothing with her large sword.

Kakin～! Kakin～! a rough sound resounded, while spinning around in the air, a Engetsu ring---doughnut shaped disk about 15 centimeters in diameter, or, a throwing weapon called a Chakram.

[Now this. Have you run out of-!?]

Dopan! Dopan! Dopan! Dopan! Dopan! Dopan!

Towards the primitive weapons, Nointo had slightly relaxed her guard towards Hajime, railguns shot out from(. . .)Hajime's right and left hands.

Immediately afterwards, bright red flashes of light appeared on Nointo's left and right side(. . .)who was facing Hajime, her head would be crushed by the assault.

Nointo couldn't release her words due to the impossible situation, she immediately positioned her twin large swords by her side as shields. All 12 bullets that were discharged by Donner and Schlag were exploding bullets. And just like before, they were pin-point accuracy attacks.

Why did the bullets shoot out from completely different directions and had Nointo pincered.

That was because of the Engetsu rings that Hajime threw out earlier. The Engetsu rings had "Sign Interception" and "Air Claws" built into them through generation magic, although they're a stealthy and assassination typed throwing weapon, more than that, it was an artifact with a special effect.

It's gate function was what made it possible to kill the Clione*the Immortal monster* at [Merujine Undersea Ruins]. In other words, the vacant hole in the Engetsu ring is directly connected to the same space with the other Engetsu rings, if you shot a bullet through it, it'll jump through space and appear out from the hole of another Engetsu ring. Of course he's also able to remotely control them just like the cross bitts.

Protecting her head were her twin large swords, the exploding bullets that calculated Nointo's every move jumped through space, every bullet left no gaps and reached their intended targets, a terrific shock wave surged out.

In the next instant,

Bakin~!

Bakin~!

Along with the sounds, Nointo's large swords broke down from the middle.

[Na-! Why, from just this much……]

Though she said that, there was no feelings in her voice, however Nointo was openly surprised.

However, she herself probably didn't notice. After Hajime released the first pin-point shots, ever since the they were in the middle of their extreme close combat battle, he had continued to aim all impacts towards the crack that had appeared on Nointo's large sword rather than at her actual body. Simply because they were equal in ability, he was waiting for the chance that would come along with breaking her weapon.

Hajime certainly didn't miss the chance that Nointo gave him, he

took out a new artifact from his “Treasure Warehouse” and threw it continuously. Nointo had no time to dodge the 10 artifacts that were thrown out at high speeds, at once, she tried to fend them off with her broken large swords.

However, that was a bad move against this artifact. What was thrown out were round ore’s with wires attached to them.

It was a capturing tool called a bola which was commonly known as a throwing weapon. Usually, after hitting its target, with enough centrifugal force it’ll start rotating, because it had built-in induction stones it could easily achieve enough speed when thrown immediately. And naturally, the thing that Hajime created was not just a simple bola.

[～! This is, I can’t move!]

The handles of Nointo’s large swords, both her arms, waist, and feet were entangled by the bola, meanwhile the spherical ores produced a ripple as they floated in the air. That was due to the effect of space magic which was created through generation magic. The weights are fixed into space itself, thus the captured object is also fixed in place.

In the first place, Nointo had the decomposition ability, so he had less than 10 seconds before she manages to actually break free. Moreover it wasn’t possible to restrain her wings because they were composed of her magic, so she would probably just reuse her magic to create new ones. As things stand, the silver wings will likely remove the constraints fairly easily.

But, Hajime's aim is only several few seconds. A one hit kill------the strongest possible blow that he could dish out in these few seconds!

Hajime pulled out a large cylinder weapon which measured up to 2 meters in length from his "Treasure Warehouse". It was the pile bunker. Kiiiiiiii~!! letting out a particular sound and charged with bright red thunder sparking out. Then, he charged straight towards Nointo.

[Ku]

Nointo leaked out a bitter voice and wrapped herself with her silver wings like a cocoon. Silver magic containing decomposition shone out brightly, it looked exactly like a moon.

Hajime slammed pile bunker directly into that beauty and created a terrific shockwave. Immediately after that, it's newly added space fixation function activated and 4 arms appeared, pile bunker was fixed in place while going against the decomposition. The bright red sparks were already at critical stages and rampaged intensely.

[Endure it if you can]

Hajime's lips were smiling fearlessly and his eyes were glaring with murderous intent. The bright red magical power of "Limit Breakthrough" shined more and more, soon the silver moon was completely dyed into a bright red moon.

Afterwards, an invisible impact surged out from the pile bunkers exit hole. It was the function which caused space vibrations built into the exit hole. It was a simplified version of the space magic “Tremble Heaven”, it shot a fierce vibration towards the target, the combination-----caused the targets durability to decrease drastically.

And along with gravity magic at the moment of the impact, the jet black stake increased it’s weight up to 20 tons and was released with a roaring sound like a thunder.

Dogooooooooooooooo~!!!!

At zero distance with Explosive charge that was compressed and shock wave conversion magic, the stake made of Azanthium drilled down in godlike speeds of acceleration due to the electromagnetic induction and it completely destroyed its prey.

The jet black stake released bright red sparks and easily pierced through the 2 silver wings, it penetrated through Nointo’s heart and still continued further, it went straight through her body and tore off a wing from its root. Then just like a meteor, it flew away into the distance while emitting a red trail.

[-------]

[.....]

What remained was Nointo’s figure with a hole literally opened at the place where her magical power supply source was. Blood

probably didn't spill out because the wound was completely charred by "Thunder Clad", it was just a body with a hole punctured in its chest which makes it not feel human at all. The eyes that peeped out were cold and mechanical as ever and the silver wings dispersed into the air.

It was simply still, Hajime seemed to have some mixed feelings about the reproachful atmosphere……

While looking at Nointo's eyes, it quickly lost its light and became hollow, while tilting a little, her body fell down onto a remote hillside nearby the churches building. On the surface of the dark mountain, Nointo's silver glow shined brightly.

When Hajime got down by her side, he pulled out Donner and aimed it at her head. Although his Magic Eye and his perception system ability showed that Nointo was definitely dead, he felt uneasy unless he shot a bullet into her head. It was a nasty habit of his.

At the moment when Hajime was about to pull the trigger on Donner,

Zudooooooooooooooooo～!!!!!

A huge explosion roared out and caused [Kamiyama] to shake severely. The spectacle that greeted Hajime's eyes when he looked back was……..the church and its cathedral collapsing while a huge mushroom cloud formed from it with a roaring sound.

[.....No way]

Hajime's unintentional mutter echoed out rather clearly.

God's Mountain

[……No way]

Unintentionally, Hajime voiced out as he watched the huge mushroom cloud that scorched the night sky. A long time ago, while stunned he remembered a scene from a war documentary that he saw on TV, then suddenly a telepathy came.

"Ma, master…..how are things on your side?"

"O? O~o, Teio huh. No, things on this side just ended…."

"Fumu, that's great then. As expected of master. We've just finished up on this side as well but, can you join up with us?"

"No, something amazing just….."

"…..We already know of the cause. Or rather, it's mistress and co.'s fault….."

"…..What was that?"

"For the time being, can you join up with us?"

"Ha~a, I got it"

It seems the cause of how the church's head temple completely collapsed is known, just what, Hajime quickly moved to meet up with Teio while his cheeks cramped up. While going up into the sky, Teio's black dragon form was quickly discovered in the air at a distance away from the mushroom cloud.

And, in Hajime's eyes, Aiko who was riding on Teio's back had an, [Awawawa], kind of feeling with panicking emotions reflected. The question, Why is Aiko here? appeared within his head, judging by Aiko's personality, she most likely begged Teio to stay and cooperated instead of running away in order to help Hajime. Rather than that, its obvious that Aiko was in a worried state of [I've went and done it now] kind of feeling.

[.....Sensei, Teio. You both seem to be fine]

[Na, Nagumo-kun! Thank goodness you were safe. ……Really, thank goodness]

"Master. Umu, for a moment there we thought that you were dead, but you're still alive. Jeez, as expected of master's sensei-dono. I didn't expect mistresses dragon breath to completely eradicate the entire church itself. It was heavenly brilliant"

Towards Teio's words, Hajime could only blink. And with a "It can't be" expression, he turned towards Aiko.

[.....Sensei, just what exactly did you do]

[Awawawawawa, th, thas*not a typo, she's flustered* wrong! I didn't mean for this to. The church's barrier was a pretty strong…..if Teio-san's breaths power was increased then……we only intended to break the barrier but……]

Although Aiko leaked out a sigh of relief when she saw Hajime's appearance, she began to panic again when Hajime asked her questions. It appears that this is what you get when you ask a panicked Aiko questions.

Aiko while riding on Teio, was determined to fight so that Ishtar's magic which caused an abnormal state wouldn't be used on Hajime. However, even with a high aptitude for magic, Aiko who didn't have a satisfactory magic formation wasn't able to release strong magic attacks. And again, the cathedral itself seemed to be an artifact which created a powerful barrier, If Ishtar was being protected within the barrier, then even Teio's breath wouldn't be able to reach him.

If this continues, Ishtar will be able to calmly use magic from a safe zone. She thought about whether or not there was a way to obtain more power to exceed the barrier as they dodge the temple knights attacks, what Aiko came up with was……to take advantage of her own special skills. By the way, Aiko's abilities are as followed,

Name: Hanataka Aiko

Age: 25

Level: 56

Class:

Farmer

Strength:

190

Vitality:

380

Resistance:

190

Agility:

310

Magic:

820

Magic Resistance:

280

Skills

Soil Management

Soil Recovery [+Automatic Recovery]

Range Cultivation [+Range Expansion] [+Foreign Substance Conversion]

Growth Stimulation

Selective Breeding

Plant Judgement System

Fertilizer Generation

Mixture Training

Automated Harvesting

Fermentation Operation [＋Rapid Fermentation] [＋Range Fermentation]

[＋Remote Fermentation]

Range Temperature Adjustment [＋Optimization] [＋Barrier Bestow]

Farm Barrier

Abundant Rain

Language Comprehension

Among these skills, it seems that she used Fermentation Operation. About [Kamiyama], since there are lots of people living here, there was a large amount of things that could be fermented. With that in mind, she seemed to have tried to performed methane fermentation like on earth. To be exact it was a replica with different world substances, however there was no change in it being flammable gas.

While single-mindedly spreading it around the church. It wasn't a magic attack so the church's barrier didn't react as it was merely fermentation and it actively collected within and outside of the barrier just like air. In order to keep it within a certain range, Teio

used manipulated the wind to blow them into a fixed location.

And, with so much flammable gas gathered like this, combined with Teio's breath it would be possible to destroy the church's barrier, with that, when she released her breath……

[…..It became like this]

"Umu. Mistress and co. blew them away on a grand scale, it's been a long time since I've last felt death. Far from destroying the barrier, the church itself erupted…….such a method, throughout mistresses life she's never thought of anything like this. As expected of master's sensei-dono. I'm impressed"

[Thas wrong! It wasn't like that! I didn't think it'll explode so much like this! Just that, I thought I shouldn't half-ass it! That's the truth! Ha~!? Everyone of the church!? What's become of them!?]

Aiko made excuses while flustering and teary eyed, her eyes began to wander towards the church ruins. Hajime and Teio also looked towards the mountain of ruins.

[……..Ma~a, they were likely blown away with it]

"The church just put too much faith in their barrier. It was also a surprise attack, completely defenseless against that blast, it's likely none are alive"

[A, ah…..it can't…..saying that, although I prepared myself for this…..]

Having been an accomplice, Aiko's face turned pale as she was the cause that led to the explosion killing everyone of the church. Although she steeled herself for the battle, she can't regain her composure when the results were being pointed out.

Unintentionally she vomited on the spot. To Aiko who was crying and vomiting, Hajime scratched his head ~Kari Kari~, and quietly snuggled up with Aiko. And he held Aiko's hands without minding that it was dirty with vomit. The current Aiko required warmth.

Aiko felt warmth being transmitted through her numb hands and her frozen heart melted. And, just for now, she forgot everything related to a teacher and student relationship, she leaped onto Hajime's chest and clung on tightly while sobbing.

"……Mistress's back……"

Teio voiced her sad opinion while looking at the terrible sight of her back, she immediately used Reproduction Magic to restore her scales. Teio also desired to allow Aiko some time to recover, she was the one who shot the breath to begin with so Aiko didn't have to feel more responsibility than necessary, however right now wasn't the right time to explain that. So, with Reproduction Magic, she slightly healed her worn-out soul.

Aiko whose energy returns, looks up from Hajime's chest. Although it's become a terrible scene because she has so much snot, tears, and vomit, Hajime didn't particularly mind and simply took out some water and towel from the "Treasure Warehouse" and cleaned up the dirty Aiko. Although Aiko was upset to have shown such disgraceful behavior, she remained as is.

[Have you calmed down? Sensei]

[Y, yes. I, I'm fine now. Nagumo-kun…..]

Aiko who pulled herself back together after Hajime's question, her face was dyed in red with shame and what not. Somehow, Hajime's voice causes her fever up. The eyes glancing upwards and staring were feverish and moist. No matter how you looked at it, that wasn't caused by only a sense of shame, rather it was the expression which held special feelings.

Hajime only saw Aiko as a teacher and not a "woman" however, as expected, when such an expression is being shown, [Are～? Isn't something about this different? Is it possibly, that kind?], he managed to understand Aiko's feelings and his cheek cramped up.

This was dangerous in various ways, Hajime immediately adverted his eyes and Teio voiced out a word of caution.

"Master. There's a person. He clearly doesn't seem to be ordinary….."

[What was that?]

It couldn't be, its surprising that anyone could have survived that kind of explosion, Hajime looked in the direction that Teio was looking, there was definitely a man with a bald head and wearing white vestments descending, Hajime and them stared directly at him. However, as Teio said, he definitely wasn't an ordinary person. That was because his body was transparent and he was swinging waveringly.

Did the man with the bald head guess that Hajime and them had recognized him, he turned around and started heading back, he was moving as if gravity didn't exist and slipped and slid to the other side of the mountain rubble. And he turned around just before he disappeared to glance over at Hajime and them.

[……Is he trying to tell us to follow?]

"Probably. What should we do, master"

[……That's right, although I want to quickly meet up with Yue and them……to begin with, we came here to look for the Age of Gods magic. It's possible that this is somehow related to that. We can't afford to miss clues]

"Fumu, That's right. Well then, lets chase after him"

With Hajime's words, Teio nods once and flaps her wings to land on the ruins, after unloading Hajime and Aiko, she reverted back to human form. And she noticed the dirt on her back, with lowered

eyebrows, she took out new clothes from the “Treasure Warehouse”. Hajime also noticed his state and pulled out some extra clothes from the “Treasure Warehouse” and finished changing quickly.

[A～u, s, sorry…..I’ve made you dirty]

The cause was Aiko, she apologized and her small frame became even smaller with shame. As a woman, it’s unbearably shameful to have vomited on another person’s clothes.

Hajime and Teio also understood that there was no helping it, they wanted to tell her not to mind it, but it wasn’t such a simple thing to do. Anyways, with the little exchange from a while ago, Aiko had accepted her feelings, therefore, she’s begun to think about various things about Hajime in particular.

However, it would be a problem if she stayed curled up forever, Hajime quickly changed the topic.

[Sensei, sorry for making you tag along. Though I don’t know what will happen…..we need to make sure of that bald guy’s identity]

[Y, yes, I understand. …..I’ll follow along with Nagumo-kun……]

Hajime thought that there was a strange power and heat from those last words she spoke, but he daringly pretended not to notice and stepped into the place where the bald man had disappeared.

The bald man's figure is shown once in a while as they advanced through the ruins. And after 5 minutes of walking they finally reached their destination, the bald man stood quietly while looking straight at Hajime's group.

[Who are you? What do you want with us?]

[……..]

The bald man did not answer Hajime's question, however he did point silently with his finger. Although the place was just a heap of rubble, the old man's glance seems to be telling them to advance. Hajime who judged that even if he questioned him he wouldn't be getting any answers, he nodded at Teio and them and went towards the location. Then, at that moment, the rubble began to levitate and the ground underneath it began to shine faintly. If you looked, one of the crests of the great labyrinth was carved there.

[…..You're one of the…..Liberators?]

As Hajime voiced his question, simultaneously the light that the ground emitted wrapped Hajime and them. And in the next instant, Hajime's group were standing in a completely unknown strange space. It wasn't that big. The room was painted lustrously black, a magic formation was drawn in the center, and there was an antique book on the pedestal by its side. It appears that they've suddenly reached the final room of the labyrinth.

Hajime and them walked towards the magic formation. Hajime grabbed Aiko's hand who had a "?" floating over her head and led her, while nodding to Teio for a moment they stepped into the magic formation.

Then, it wasn't the usual feeling, their memories were being examined, there was a sense of something going deeper inside, and the 3 people instinctively let out a groan. It was a very uncomfortable sensation, for a moment, they thought it was a trap, but in the next moment it completely cleared up. And, were they recognized as people who's completed other labyrinths, the knowledge of magic was implanted directly into their heads.

[.....Spirit Magic?]

[U~mu. It appears to be magic that can directly interfere with souls]

[I see. The reason how Miredi's soul survived and was directly implemented into a golm was this….]

To the experience of knowledge being carved directly into the head suddenly, Aiko was crouched down holding her head, After Hajime noded with a consent face, they approached the pedestal by the side and picked up the book.

It appears that the contents were notes written by Rouse Byrne*pronounced Ban* who was the founder of the [Kamiyama] great labyrinth. It explained practically the same thing that Oscar Orcus had, the liberators exchanges up until he died at [Kamiyama].

However, because Hajime wasn't interested in it, he quickly skipped through it. He didn't care about Rouse Byrne's life. Why did he only leave himself with an image body, he probably could have lived like Miredei by using Spirit Magic, although the reason was explained during the confession, he was through*as in done

with the subject*.

And, the last section was describing the conditions to capturing the labyrinth, according to it, when the image body of Rouse Byrne appears as the guide, it would mean that you've pretty much been accepted.

Because the image body required at least 2 or more proofs of capturing great labyrinths, also having no faith in god, or overcoming some kind of influence that god's power acted on in order to appear. In other words, it appears that [Kamiyama's] concept, was to possess a firm will that wouldn't bow down to god.

That was probably it but, originally, if you challenged the proper route, it may have been possible to be accepted by the will. Aiko had been accepted, Although she received quite a lot of teachings from the church for a long time, because her feelings for her students were much higher than faith, or maybe it was enough that she had the judgement to go against the church.

For the people of this world, it was a rather harsh condition but, it was an easy condition for Hajime and them.

At last, Aiko who recovered from the shock of obtaining Age of Gods magic is encouraged, and they took the ring from the pedestal along with the book, they then quickly left the place. Once again, Rouse Byrne's crest shined and they returned back to their original place.

[Sensei, are you alright?]

[U~u, yes. somehow…..even so, such amazing magic…..certainly, if theres such incredible magic then, there might also be magic that sends us back to Japan]

Aiko nodded as she consented and was massaging her temple. Her expression was of someone who was tired from the rough events that developed within several days and had finally ended, she loosened up when the possibility of returning was truely felt.

[Well then, we know the place where the magic formation is now, lets quickly join up with Yue and them]

[A~, that's right! The Kingdom is being attacked right? I hope everyone's safe…..]

With a worried expression Aiko clenched her chest as she prayed, then they began to descend from the mountain. Though I say that, the only way down from [Kamiyama] to the Kingdom was to jump through the lift.

Aiko's Scream was echoing as she experienced free-falling, Hajime and Teio are through though. With Aiko on his shoulder Hajime and them landed on the ground and, disregarding the flames and screams of the Kingdom which Aiko had a skeptical expression towards and they decided to first go to where Kaori and them were.

And, what they saw when they joined up……

With a sword thrust through the chest, Kaori's figure had already

ceased breathing.

Betrayal

This is not meant to be a perfect translation, I cannot read japanese characters and this was carefully edited based on translations I got from my Machine Translator. Therefore, there are bound to be errors here and there! At best, this could be considered as an unedited Final Draft towards an Official Translation

Going back in time a little. Precisely when Ririana and them arrived in the Royal Palace.

Pakyaa~aaaaan!

[Tsu!? Just what is-!?]

Towards the unpleasant sound of glass being broken, Shizuku Yaegashi who was sleeping in her room quickly jumped into alert mode and got out of her bed sheets while grabbing onto her black katana which was beside her pillow. It was clearly the movements of a person who continues being cautious of their surroundings even while resting.

[.....]

For a while, Shizuku hid her breathing with a stern expression and was ready to draw her katana at any moment, however there were no abnormalities within her room so she leaked out a sigh of relief.

The reason why Shizuku was releasing this kind of alertness was

because over the past several days, there were absolutely no signs or sightings of Ririana or Aiko.

Even for some time before that, she noticed a sense of incongruity within the Royal Palace. On that day, the day when Aiko returned, she disappeared after announcing that she had something important to tell them at dinner time, due to this shizuku suspected that something bad had happened to Aiko in order to silence her.

Naturally, she searched for the two missing peoples whereabouts, though they were told that Aiko and them were just being questioned by the head of the church, Ishtar, at the main temple, she wasn't allowed to meet them directly. In addition they even forcefully avoided her by declaring to Shizuku that they would be released in a few days, moreover, Ririana's father, King Erihido also said to not worry about them, she could do nothing but withdraw reluctantly for the time being.

However, even then her vague anxiety didn't disappear, just like now, when going to bed she was vigilant and cautious like a spy.

When Shizuku soundlessly got off her bed, she quickly straightened up her equipment in a few seconds and carefully left the room. Since Kaori decided to travel with Hajime, Shizuku was the only person in the room now. When she confirmed that there were no abnormalities within the corridor, she immediately knocked on Kouki and Ryutaro's door which was opposite to hers.

The door opened immediately and Kouki's appearance was seen. Ryutaro was in the back of the room and seemed to be fully awake. It appears that they've also woken up like Shizuku due to the loud sound a while ago.

[Kouki, please have more caution. To suddenly open the door…..wouldn't it be troublesome if it was an assailant? *unsure of this line, 誰何するくらい手間じゃないでしょ*]

Shizuku's eyebrows drop a little when Kouki opened the door without any caution and warned him. On the other hand, Kouki had an astonished expression. Even though he heard the breaking sound, he didn't think that there would be any immediate dangers in the corridors of the Royal Palace. It appears that he wasn't fully awake yet.

These past several days, Shizuku had a sense of incongruity within the Royal Palace and about Aiko and them, [Something is wrong, keep your guard up], is what she continually said but, Kouki and Ryutaro thought she was thinking too much about it and didn't take it seriously.

[More importantly, Shizuku. What was that a while ago? It sounded like something was breaking……]

[……I don't know. Anyways, lets wake everyone up and gather information. Whatever it is, I've got a bad feeling from it….]

Shizuku only said that and turned around to knock on her classmates doors one after another. Most of the students were gathered for an immediate meeting due to the sudden crashing sound from a while ago. Uneasily, Kouki began to raise his voice as the students began to gather in the corridor looking annoyed that their slumber was disturbed.

Then, at that time, one of the maids that was friends with Shizuku rushed in. She comes from a house which enjoys fencing and had the linage of knights, due to this connection she became intimate with Shizuku.

[Shizuku-sama…..]

[Nia!]

The maid called Nia ran up besides Shizuku while looking like she was in low spirits. It was a shadow of her usual dignified atmosphere, Shizuku remembered the sense of incongruity and raised her eyebrows, but it was overtaken by surprise at the information that Nia brought, her sense of incongruity was completely blown away.

[The first large barrier was broken]

[……What was that?]

Nia plainly tells the truth as Shizuku instinctively asked back.

[The Majinzoku*fixing Ninzoku errors lol* are invading. A huge army was developed on the outskirts of the Kingdom’s capital and their attack broke the large barrier]

[….it can’t be, just how did they…..]

The information was far too unbelieveable, even Shizuku lost her calm and became stunned.

The other classmates were also the same, they began to mutter noisily. The Majinzoku's army, it was impossible for them to be able to invade the King's capital without arousing anyones attention, with the large barrier broken it became even harder to take in. It's unavoidable that they wouldn't be able to keep calm.

[.....Is only the first barrier of the large barrier broken?]

Within that, with a stern expression Kouki asked Nia. The large barrier that protects the Kingdom was composed of 3 pieces, The first on the outside, second, then third barrier, the third barrier was the strongest as it covered the smallest scale of land out of the others.

[Yes. For now…..however, the first barrier was broken in a single blow. It's only a matter of time before they topple though everything……]

Towards Nia's answer, Kouki suggested to everyone that they should help out in repulsing the army.

[Even if just a little we should help buy time. In the meantime the Kingdom's residents should take shelter, if the army corps and knights are prepared….]

There were few that showed a resolute expression towards Kouki's words. Shizuku and Ryutaro, Suzu, it was only the front groups such as Nagayama's party.

The other classmates only had a gloomy look while turning their eyes away. They are the people who have lost their will to stand on the front lines. To suddenly challenge a huge army was only further increasing their hesitation.

Then even if by ourselves, Kouki began to resolute his heart, surprisingly, Eri Nakamura answered.

[Wait, Kouki-kun. Rather than fighting on your own, I think we should quickly join with Meld and them]

[Eri….but]

[Nia-san, the army……how much do we know about them?]

[……they're roughly 100,000 in strength]

The students all held their breaths when they heard the number.

[Kouki-kun. We can't suppress them if it's only us. …..We have to oppose numbers with numbers. Even if we're stronger than an ordinary person, I think that you should go to the place where you're most needed. That is, shouldn't we cooperate side by side with Meld's group…..]

Although it was from the modest and docile glasses girl Eri, the strength in her eyes wasn't below that of Kouki and the others. And her opinion was justifiable.

[Un, Suzu is also in favor with Eririn. As expected of Suzu's Eririn! Those glasses aren't just for show!]

[Suzu~u……The glasses are unrelated~]

[Fufu, I also agree with Eri. I lost my calm a little there. What about you Kouki?]

Towards the 3 girls opinions, Kouki was hesitating. However, after carefully thinking over Eri's judgement, Kouki also trusted her quite a bit, in the end, he decided to join up with Meld's knights and army corps just as Eri said.

Kouki and them began to run towards where the knights and soldiers were mobilizing. No one noticed the smile in the shape of a crescent by their side…….

~~~
~~~

[Yes, We've heard from Nia already. Ehtto, where's Meld-san?]

Kouki nodded towards the welcoming words and question of José, and he didn't see Meld's appearance as he looked around so he asked about his whereabouts.

[The head is dealing with a few things. More importantly, sa~a, come into the center. The Hero is our leader after all….]

As José said, Kouki and them were guided into the center where the soldiers were lined up. The classmates who stayed behind, [Eh? Us as well?], showed a puzzled expression, while being crowded by silent soldiers they could do nothing but follow Kouki and them.

Passing through the silence, the surrounding soldier's expressions hardly changed at all too, along with the knights appearances, the feeling of incongruity began to swell up within Shizuku. It was the bad feelings that she felt ever since the beginning when she woke up, Shizuku's heart was conflicted. Unconsciously, she put power into her hand that was gripping her black kanata.

And when Kouki and them were completely surrounded by the soldiers and knights, José restarted his speech.

[Everyone, the situation draws near. However, there's nothing to fear. There is no enemies who can stand against us. We do not know defeat. Death shall not strike us. Sa~a, everyone, welcome our Hero. Right now, we exist specifically for this day. Sa~a, take up your swords]

The soldiers and the knights draw out their swords altogether.

[It’s the beginning of the slaughter. Watch closely]

José took something out of his bosom and held it over his head. As instructed, not only the soldiers but also kouki and them payed attention.

And….

Ka!!

Light bursted out.

The thing José was holding shot out bright light which was comparable to Hajime’s flashbang. Kouki and them who were paying attention to it were completely defenseless, they immediately avert their eyes and cover them while releasing a short scream, their sights have been temporarily blocked out by looking straight at the light.

And, in the next instant……

Zuburi～

countless vivid sounds ring out.

[Agu~?]

[Ga~a!]

[Gufu~!?]

Following that, muffled screams were heard from many places.

The screams were different from the ones caused by the light a while ago. It was the voice that leaked out when in agony and pain. Then immediately afterwards, there was the sound of countless people falling onto the ground ~Dosa Dosa~.

Inside that, only Shizuku understood the cause. After entering the open space, her caution was raised to the maximum. She felt a sense of incongruity within José's speech. Thats why, immediately when the flash of light exploded, she took up a defensive stance without being shaken and immediately after that she was able to block the assassin's blade with her black kanata. It was likely the gift of training that allowed her to only rely on the presence she felt while her eyes were blinded.

And, after the light settled down, Shizuku began to look around her surroundings as her sight began to recover, every single one of her classmates were pierced in the back by the knights and soldiers swords and being held down onto the ground.

[Wha, this…..]

They raised their groaning voices as they were knocked down and suppressed from above, furthermore, looking at her classmates appearances that had swords in their backs, Shizuku's voice was stuck in her throat. It can't be, she began to imagine the worst outcome that they were all dead but, it appears that everyone was just barely alive as they all raised out voices in agony.

Although she was slightly relieved when knowing that, Shizuku turned a stern glance towards the surrounding soldiers in the unpredictable situation, a strange scene was reflected within the mesh of the crowd and she unintentionally stiffened up.

[Ara-ra, should I say that it was as expected? …….Ne~e, Shizuku?]

[Eh? Eh…..what are you-!?]

Right, while all other classmates were in critical condition on the ground, there was only 1 other student that was calmly standing. That student was completely different from their usual self, with a glutinous voice they talked to Shizuku. Since their atmosphere changed too much, Shizuku's questions and doubts were stuck in her throat.

In that moment, once again, a knight thrusted out their sword towards Shizuku's back.

[Ku!?]

While being shaken up by the other persons sudden change, Shizuku was barely able to dodge and turned towards the student with an amazed glance.

[You also dodged this huh…..really, Shizuku is troublesome huh?]

[What are you sa-!?]

Further increasing in intensity, the soldiers and knights join in and thrust their swords out. Shizuku surpassed them all then suddenly turned her gaze as her name was called out.

[Shizuku-sama! Help……]

[Nia!]

There the appearance of Nia was thrown on the ground with a knight on top of her and a sword about to stab into her. Shizuku immediately arrived nearby Nia's location in an instant with her high-speed movement skill "No Rhythm", she swung her sheath at the knight who was on top of Nia and blew him away.

[Nia, are you alright?]

[Shizuku-sama……]

While supporting up Nia who was on the ground, Shizuku looked around her surroundings in caution.

Towards that Shizuku, Nia murmurs and clings both hands around her.

And,

……A dagger was stabbed into Shizuku's back.

[Agu~!? Ni, Nia? Wh, why…….]

[……]

With an expression like she couldn't believe what happened and grimacing over the acute pain running through her back, Shizuku looked down at Nia who was clinging to her.

Her expression no longer had the cheerful look nor the familiarity it once held, she only returned Shizuku's glance expressionlessly back at her.

Shizuku finally noticed it at last. At first, she thought Nia's state was due to the Kingdom being invaded, however that wasn't it, her atmosphere was almost identical to the expressionless knights and soldiers which surrounded her, there was definitely a different reason for this.

Nia held onto Shizuku's arm and twisted it as she pinned her down onto the ground, she then attached shackles which sealed her magic just like all the other students had.

[Ahahaha, as expected even for Shizuku, surely you didn't think that that child would turn against you? Un un, that's probably right? That's why I purposely took time to prepare it?]

With scorching pain running through her back and gritting her teeth on the cold ground, Shizuku realized that something was done to the soldiers and Nia. And although she didn't want to admit it, the disastrous scene that unfolded before her, right now, she called out to her close friend who had an unusually unpleasant smirk on her face.

[What does this...mean…..Eri]

Right, that person who was modest and quiet, attentive and kind-hearted, Shizuku and their trusted companion which they shared their joys and sorrow with, it was that person, Eri Nakamura.

Even while sustaining severe injuries, the students who were targeted and still alive could do nothing but have an expression filled with agony, they watched Eri's expression as she walked calmly and steadily through the soldiers in a grand manner.

Rather than answering Shizuku's question, Eri began to laugh oddly in amusement as she moves towards Kouki. And after taking off her glasses, she pulls on the magic sealing collar which was placed on Kouki's neck with an attractive smile.

[E, Eri….Just….what...gu….happened…..]

Although not to the extent of Shizuku and them who were his childhood friends, Eri who was one of his companions and close friend had a far too different atmosphere around her, Kouki desperately questions her while enduring the pain of the sword which ran through his body. However, Eri had a delirious expression which contained heat within it and disregarded Kouki's question.

Then,

[Aha, Kouki-kun, I~caught~you~]

while saying so, she placed her lips on top of Kouki's. Within the strange silence which surrounded the area, a vivid sound of water lapping could be heard. Eri was crazily releasing her emotions as if she had been saving it up for years towards Kouki.

Although Kouki couldn't understand what was going on, he was desperately trying to shake free but, he was suppressed by several people, along with the magic sealing collar, like all the other students he also had his hands and feet bound as well, moreover his power was sapped from him as there was a sword thrust through his body.

Was she finally satisfied, Eri separated her lips while creating a silver thread. Then, with and ecstatic expression in her eyes she licked her lips and started to stand up slowly, she then glared at the students who were being held down and bleeding. Absentminded expressions as well as agonized expressions were lined up. When she saw such a spectacle she nodded in satisfaction,

her eyes stopped towards Shizuku and she smiled.

[Ma~a, these kinds of things. Shizuku]

[~.....What do you mean….Kofu~....]

With an expression which showed she didn't understand, Shizuku vomited blood as she glared at Eri, Eri shook her head with an expression that said, my bad, and began to talk about the reason as if she was talking to a baby.

[U~n, you don't know huh? You see, I've always wanted Kouki-kun. That's why, I did what was necessary to obtain him. It's as simple as that]

[.....If you liked Kouki then...if you'd confessed then...this kind of thing…]

Towards Shizuku's rebuttal, for a moment Eri's becomes expressionless. However, she began to talk and returned a smirk immediately again.

[It's useless, useless, use~less. Confessing is useless. Kouki-kun's kind-hearted so there's no way he'd see someone else as special. Even if there's only garbage with no value around his surroundings, he wouldn't leave them alone because he's too kind-hearted. That's why, in order to make Kouki-kun mine only, I have to work hard and get rid of all the garbage in the surroundings]

You can't even understand that? as Eri shrugs her shoulders like it

was a foolish thing. Although they were Being called garbage, they didn't have much anger as they were too surprised at the sudden change. For the person in front of her to have changed this much, honestly, Shizuku looked at the girl as if this was the first time they've met.

[Fufu, it was good that we were sent to a different world. In Japan, it would have been truly difficult to clean up the garbage, it was harsh living there. Of course, I won't allow us to be sent back after this war is over. Along with Kouki-kun, the both of us will continue living here for ever~and~ever~]

While looking at the laughing and giggling Eri, a sudden impossible guess came into Shizuku's mind and she unintentionally voiced it out.

[...It can't be...the reason the large barrier...broke so easily was because.....]

[Ahaha, so you've noticed? Right, It was me. I told them to break the artifact maintaining the large barrier]

It appears that Shizuku's worst case scenario was spot on. The reason why the Majinzoku was able to arrive at the outskirts of the Kingdom without being spotted and easily breaking through the large barrier, everything was due to Eri. Eri's line of sight was interestly looking at the soulless soldiers and knights that were standing by her side, she would probably let them do it.

[If I killed you guys, I wouldn't be able to stay in the Kingdom any longer.....That's why you see, I contacted the Majinzoku, guiding the Kingdom to destruction through the people from another

world*This line's iffy, 王都への手引きと異世界人の殺害*, I'll send the knights which I turned into puppets to the devil's lands as tributes, then it'll only be me and Kouki-kun left around]

[Impossible...to contact the Majinzoku…]

Kouki somehow recovered from the shock of the kiss, he muttered with an expression which that showed he couldn't believe it. Eri had been training together with them at the Kingdom for a long time. Inside of the large barrier the Majinzoku wouldn't be able to get in, it shouldn't be possible to contact them, he began rebutting out poor arguments while trying to believe in Eri.

However, Eri easily shatters his hopes.

[The Majinzoku woman who attacked us at [Orcus Great Labyrinth]. While leaving I quickly did it, Necromancy that is? As I expected, the Majinzoku came to recover her body, so I used it. From that situation, I definitely got cold feet. If what I proposed was rejected and I was murdered instead…..unintentionally, I had used Necromancy…..I didn't want to be doubted so I showed my necromancy to increase their impressions…..ma~a, in the end everything was alright….]

According to Eri's words, she performed Necromancy on the Majinzoku woman, and left a message for the Majinzoku who would come and look for her since she didn't return. Due to this, Mikhail had known how Cattleya had died. In addition, she communicated with the Majinzoku through a suitable "human's" dead body.

When Eri's story was heard, Shizuku remembered about Eri's

Necromancy and her face which was already pale from blood loss became even paler.

Necromancy was magic which acts on residual thoughts(. . . .)of the corpse. She concealed the fact that she could actually use it perfectly. If that's so, all the knights and soldiers who looked soulless that were surrounding Shizuku and them, the worst possible situation came to her mind when she thought about Nia who was holding her down.

[The reason...for these guys...appearances is…..]

[Of course it's because of Necromancy~. Everyone is already dead~. Ahahahahahaha!]

Shizuku grit her teeth as she was told the cruel answer and a desperate rebuttal was voiced.

[...That's a lie...the undead...cannot talk back…….They shouldn't...be able to!]

[Look, that's because of my ability? Through some memory and thought patterns during their lifetime being added in they became able to talk. It was my original through Necromancy "Bind Soul" I guess? Ah, even then the sense of incongruity remains huh. I wasn't able to carry through with everything within a day, there I began to worry about what to do…..one day, a person offered their cooperation. A beautifully silver haired person. I was surprised that my plan was found out, in that instant, I prepared my resolution for various things…..It wasn't certain that I was being accused at the time, although I couldn't trust them I could at least take advantage of them instead~]

Really, in such a hurry~, Eri pretended to be wiping away her sweat. Most likely, there might have been various processes which had to take place, but she didn't show any signs of explaining them out.

[Actually, I accidentally got my hands on the King's close aid so I'm great right? In return he became like a dangerous drugged person though. Ma~a, thanks to that I was able to quickly push forward my plans. Kufufu, it's alright! I won't waste everyone's deaths. I'll properly~, recycle them and allow the Majinzoku to use them!]

Originally, they only act on residual thoughts through necromancy, but if you take in the consideration of the dead person's intent while still alive, the residual thought's would be coated in magic as they're brought back to life, they'll move exactly as the magician wants, alternatively in a way where techniques are used to possess a corpse and make it do the magicians bidding.

Their performance is normal, it's uncompared to while they're alive, they won't move unless directed since they have no thinking ability of their own. Of course, if you give an order like "Keep attacking" they'll continue, they're able to keep moving even without detailed instructions.

In other words, when Nia and José talked with Shizuku and them, they had no ability to think, it should be impossible through necromancy. That's why there was a sense of incongruity, the technique which Eri called "Bind Soul", it's a technique which adds memory and thought patterns of thinking into the corpse through extracting the remains of the spirit.

This was basically an ability to interfere with the soul. That is, Eri managed to work hard and step into the realm of the Age of God's magic on her own. Definitely a cheat, she often said that she was unsuited for Necromancy, that amount of studying and genius-class talent is definitely something that deserves astonishment. Alternatively, it may be due to her immense drive towards her obsession.

By the way, the reason why Eri didn't immediately kill her classmates was because "Bind Soul" could only be used once at a time immediately after death.

[Gu~u...stop it...Eri! If you do those things…..I…..]

[Won't forgive me? Ahaha, I thought you'd say so. Kouki-kun is kind-hearted right. Besides, no matter how much garbage I clean up….that's why, I'll also properly use "Bind Soul" on Kouki-kun, I'll be able to turn you into mine? No one elses, only looking at me, carrying out my every wish! Only my Kouki-kun! A~a, a~a! Just imagining it makes me feel like cuming!]

Eri began to embrace herself and writhe her body with a nympholeptic expression. There was no longer the appearance of the calm girl who was in the book committee. All the classmate's thought. She's gone insane. "Bind Soul" was a skill specifically made to ease and further increase the Necromancer's convenience in giving out instructions, however there is no change that a puppet is only a puppet. Once you understood that, still, she didn't seem to mind that kind of Kouki.

[Lies….that's a lie! Uu, Eririn is, th….there's no way Eri would do this! ...surely....something… right….she's only being manipulated! Come to your senses Eri!]

Suzu who was Eri's best friend shouted out with a distorted expression while panting in pain. She was scratching at the grounds with her hands as if she was trying to crawl towards Eri. Eri turned towards Suzu and looked her straight in the eye with a smile. And she slowly walked towards the closest person who was laying on the ground, Kondo Reiichi.

Kondo possibly felt a bad premonition, [Hi~], he let out a scream while trying to get even a little bit further away from Eri who was approaching. Naturally, he was perfectly held down, the only thing he could do was scream as his magic was sealed as well.

Eri who came besides Kondo which caused him to once again tremble with fear, and gave him a smile. Kouki and them were raising their voices, [Stop!] [Stop it!].

[St, stop!? Ga~a, ah, agua…]

Kondo's muffled screams began to break out. The sword was once again stabbed into Kondo's back but this time, where his heart was. For a little while, though Kondo struggled and showed tenacity because of his strong status, his movements quickly became feeble, and…..he stopped moving altogether.

Eri placed her hands on Kondo and began to mutter a chant. After she completed the chant and muttered the magic name "Bind Soul", a semitransparent Kondo overlapped with his own corpse.

Just after that, the knight who was holding down Kondo got up and moved back one step. Kouki and them were waiting anxiously, Kondo whose heart should have been destroyed, slowly lifted his body up, he stood up with a soulless expression just like the surrounding soldiers and knights.

[Yes~. One puppet's been completed~]

Eri's bright voice resounded as the other students looked at Kondo with surprise as he stood still silently and expressionlessly. Just now, one person was finally killed, towards the scene of death they couldn't even voice out their thoughts.

[E, Eri….why…..]

Towards Suzu who voiced out a question with a shocked expression, Eri voiced out the worst possible conclusion.

[Ne~e, Suzu? Thank you? Japan and even here, you were very convenient to use to stay nearby Kouki-kun?]

[……Eh?]

[I give up? The atmosphere between Kouki-kun as he was around Shizuku and Kaori was too much. If you approached carelessly, other women would drill holes into you…..because we had no powers on that side, it was a matter of time before you'd self-destruct for getting close. In that respect, I was thankful for Suzu's existence. You seemed to be bright no matter how foolishly used and exposed you were? Even if I approached Kouki and them no one would complain about it. Thats why, the position of "Suzu Tanimura's best friend" was truly convenient. Thanks to you, I was

able to stay close to Kouki-kun over on the other side and even when in a different world we got to be in the same party….. un, Suzu was really~ convenient! That's why, thank you!]

[……Ah, uu, ah…..]

From the shock of Eri's confession, the sounds of something breaking within Suzu ranged out. Suzu learned that her best friend which she had been together with and believed in all the time, was nothing more than a fantasy. Even the light of the escapism within her eye disappeared.

[Eri~! You're-!]

Towards the overboarding words, Shizuku yelled out in anger. Nia who was turned into a puppet pulled up Shizuku's head by her hair and pounded it onto the ground. However, as if she was stating, what about it, Shizuku's eyes flared up in anger.

[Fufu, you're angry huh? That expression that you've got is very good. I extremely hated you. Your face fit in so naturally besides Kouki-kun and even your eyes carried a sense of condescending attitude, I hated everything about you. That's why, for you in particular, I'll be giving you a special role]

[….a role….you say?]

[Kufu, ne~e? What kind of feelings would you have for killing your best friend after finally meeting together after a long time?]

From those words, Shizuku's eyes opened widely as she guessed what Eri was planning to do.

[...It can't be, Kaori!?]

As if saying, You did well!, Eri began clapping her hands together with a smirk on her lips. While using Shizuku as a puppet, Eri was going to try and murder Kaori.

[It was alright to just leave her with Nagumo but…..there's a person who said, I would love to have that person as a puppet! I had been helped in various ways, so I decided to give them their reward. I'm someone who goes through with their promises after all! I'm such a good woman right?]

[Quit joking around! Gofu~...aguu~a!?]

While enraged, Shizuku who tried to move only managed to voluntarily enlarge the wound which was inflicted on her, Nia's blade sunk further in.

[Aha, is it painful? hurts? I'm kind-hearted so. Right now, I'll relieve you of your pain…..]

This time it appears to be Shizuku's turn, with a smirking smile she compromised. Kouki and them desperately tried to resist as an illusion of Shizuku becoming a puppet like Kondo came into their minds.

Kouki's resistance in particular was much more intense, while desperately raising his voice, cracks began to appear on the 5

magic sealing shackles which were on him. Did he use “Limit Breakthrough” and “Supremacy Dispersal*Probably wrong but I’m keeping it lol, 覇潰*”, terrifying pressure began to overflow from his body.

However, the knights whose brain limiters were removed showed extreme strength uncomparable towards their lifetime and perfectly held down his joints, it wasn’t possible to immediately shake them off. Kouki’s expression became crossed with despair.

Shizuku was desperately focused her conscious which was fainting because of the amount of blood she was losing, she decided that until the final moment, she would continue staring directly into Eri’s eyes with fierce anger until she averted her eyes.

At that, Eri looked down on her with a smirk on her lips, did she want to perform the last rites herself in the end, she received a sword from a nearby knight.

[See you later then? Shizuku. Pretending to be your friend seemed to make me want to puke?]

Though Shizuku was staring at Eri, inside of her heart she was looking towards her best friend. Although she knows it’ll likely not reach her, still, thinking about the tragedy that was to come in the future, she gave her prayers to her best friend who was on a trip somewhere in the world.

(I’m sorry, Kaori. The next time we meet, please do not trust me…..stay alive…..obtain happiness…..)

The knights sword which was invertedly held in her hand reflected the moonlight and shined. And, as if driving a wooden stake into a vampire, the sharp tip of the sword was brought down quickly towards Shizuku's heart.

While watching the approaching danger, Shizuku prayed. Please allow my best friend to survive, please allow her to obtain happiness. Although I'll be going on ahead, the dead me would end up hurting you, but because he is near you I'm sure you'll be alright. Live strongly, gain happiness with your beloved person….please…..

Fadingly, the world began to pass by slowly within Shizuku's mind within that moment. Ah, this is my life flashing before my eyes….finally, Shizuku began to think that the sword would now pierce through, her life

…….was not taken.

[Eh?]

[Eh?]

Eri's voice sounded out along with Shizuku's.

The knights sword which Eri brought down was stopped by a barrier which was the size of a palm. The two who were completely stunned at what had happen, heard the voice of someone which should not have been there. Being driven into a corner, the voice was full of impatience. It was the person who

Shizuku was wishing happiness for, her best friend's voice.

[Shizuku-chan!]

Light of Condemnation

This is not meant to be a perfect translation, I cannot read japanese characters and this was carefully edited based on translations I got from my Machine Translator. Therefore, there are bound to be errors here and there! At best, this could be considered as an unedited Final Draft towards an Official Translation

[Shizuku-chan!]

Along with the voice, before she noticed 10 shining barriers were created and protected her. And within those, there were also lights which cut in between Nia and Eri that bursted out! Should it have been called, barrier burst or something, it was a technique which makes the magical power contained within the barriers go out of control and bursts out light as well as letting loose the remains of the barrier.

[～!?]

Eri immediately covered her face with both of her arms but, she was blown back after flinching due to the bright light which caused her to lose her balance as the remains of the barrier rammed into her.

Nia who was holding down Shizuku was also similarly blown back. Although she immediately got back up to try and restrain Shizuku, before that, a rope of light grew out from the ground and bounded her.

Shizuku was completely dumbfounded at the current situation and

turned towards the voice which called out her name.

And from within the gaps of the knights who were surrounding them, she caught the appearance of her best friend which shouldn't have been here. It was not an illusion. Kaori was definitely looking at Shizuku with a grief expression. Surely with the sight of Shizuku and everyone elses tragic state, being able to just barely make it in time has allowed her eyes to loosen up in relief.

[Ka, Kaori……]

[Shizuku-chan! Wait for a bit! I'll help you right away!]

Kaori's voice sounded out desperately towards Shizuku and them who were surrounded by soldiers as she appeared from the entrance of the plaza. Then, she quickly started chanting full-heal recovery magic. It was the first-class recovery magic of the light system, "Sacred Text". From her classmate's current state and the situation, she judged that she should quickly heal all members.

[～!? Why are you here! You guys sure are set on getting in my way!]

Eri gave out orders to the knights as her face distorted in anger. The knights all attacked Kaori together in order to stop her chant.

However, Kaori was not hurt, the swords that the knights were wielding were stopped by a barrier of light.

[Everyone! What exactly happened! Return to your senses! Eri! What exactly does this mean!?]

Having protected Kaori who was chanting the first-class recovery magic, Ririana soon appeared right behind Kaori. A sphere-like barrier wrapped around Kaori and herself in order to defend themselves.

Ririana was extremely confused as the situation was that the knights and soldiers were trying to kill Kouki and them and they were also following Eri's commands. While placing up the barrier she called out to question Eri. However Eri wasn't listening at all.

Ririana's techniques were definitely of the higher class. Being able to cover an entire caravan in a barrier and holding out against the attacks of over 40 bandits. That's why, even if the knights delivered severe attacks with their limiters removed, it was definitely capable of holding out until Kaori's chant was finished.

And, because Eri understood that, her expression showed impatience.

[Chi, it can't be helped I guess?]

Was it because of impatience? Eri gave up on turning her classmates into puppets and decided to kill them all off before they were healed.

Then, at that time, suddenly before Ririana's eyes, one of the knights who brandished his sword against the barrier was beheaded and collapsed onto the ground.

The one who appeared behind the fallen knight was……Daisuke Hiyama.

[Shirasaki! Princess Ririana! Are you alright!]

[Hiyama-san? With such an awful wound, you-!?]

Ririana's face turned pale as she saw Hiyama's state. Although her chant wasn't interrupted, Kaori's eyes also opened up widely. That was to be expected as Hiyama's chest was drenched in blood. No matter how you looked at it, he had desperately and recklessly tried to escape from his restraints.

He shook violently and staggered, Ririana quickly removed part of the barrier and allowed Hiyama who had his hand placed on the barrier, inside. With a thump, Hiyama fell down. However in that moment, Shizuku's impatient shout resounded out.

[Don't! Get away from him!]

She warned them desperately while vomiting out blood. Shizuku had noticed. Why was only Hiyama able to break out of the restraints when even Kouki couldn't and who was the person that Eri talked about who wanted Kaori…….It was clear that Ririana's barrier would stay in place until Kaori's chant was finished. Despite all that, the only person who would pretend to help out…..

[Kya～aa!?]

[Agu～u!?]

Shizuku's warning was not on time.

Ririana's barrier disappeared, what was seen there was the appearance of Ririana who was embracing Kaori's back closely had been knocked down onto the ground and a sword ran through Kaori's chest.

[Kaoriiii--!]

Shizuku's scream echoed out.

With an crazed look in his eyes, Hiyama had embraced Kaori's back closely with his face buried onto her neck. What was in his hands behind Kaori was obviously a sword which pierced through her heart.

Hiyama was never injured in the first place. He had been pretending while preparing in the case that Kouki's explosive powers as the hero allows him to break free. And though he was surprised at Kaori's and Ririana's appearance, he judged that at the rate things were going, Kouki and them would get healed and decided to act.

[Hihi~, finally, I've finally obtained it. …..As expected, I'm better than Nagumo? Yeah, that's right? Na~a, Shirasa….no, Kaori? Na~a? Gihi~, oi, Nakamura, hurry up already. The contract]

Eri shrugged her shoulders towards Hiyama's words. And in order to place "Bind Soul" onto Kaori she approached.

Right afterwards, a scream resounded out.

[Gaa~aaaa! You guys--!!]

Kouki was. Desperately trying to break out of the restraints even as his body creaked as his anger was at his boiling point. He had thought that Kaori had been killed and seems to have lost himself. The cracks on the 5 magic sealing shackles began to gradually grow larger. It was extraordinary strength. However, it was still not enough to be released from the knight's restraints.

Then, as Hiyama relaxed as he saw that, a low muttered voice could be heard in his ear. If you looked, it was Kaori who was muttering even after receiving a fatal wound. Hiyama became anxious and brought his ear closer to her mouth. And what he heard was……

[----------at…the…end of….the…year, I…smile…"Sacred…Text"]

Even with a mortal wound, she completed the first-class magic. Kaori's magic was casted through will power. Hiyama's eyes were

opened wide in astonishment.

Kaori herself should have realized that a fatal wound was inflicted onto her. Despite it all, till the last breath what she muttered were not cries of lament, nor calling out the name of a precious person…..she decided to fight.

Kaori had thought about it. He, the person who she fell for, no matter the situation and no matter the opponent, he fought without giving up. If so then, she who wished to stand next to him could not expose such ungracefulness. And with barely any consciousness left, with just her strong desires to finish chanting the magic, it has definitely been completed in exchange for her life.

Ripples of light began to spread out from Kaori. In the blink of an eye it ran throughout the plaza and resulted as a powerful heal for those that were injured. The swords were being pushed out by the healing light. For some reason the puppet's movements also became more dull.

Naturally, the light of healing also affected Kaori, though the wound was being healed, the injury that Kaori received was through a vital place unlike the others. Moreover, as the wound was closing up Hiyama frantically gouged into her wound and she wasn't healed at all. With that, Kaori was certain to die.

[Ahhhhhhh!!]

Kouki's scream gushed out.

With his body healed he could perform at his best, with that the shackles that were already cracked were all destroyed as if they were fragile things. At the same time, pure-white light radiated intensely from his body, expressing his anger. With the intense torrent of light, Kouki had raised his stats by a magnitude of 5. It was the final derivation of “Limit Breakthrough”, “Supremacy Dispersal”.

[I’ll never…..forgive you guys!]

Although the knights were trying to restrain Kouki, Kouki easily snatches the sword of the knight which stabbed him and easily cut the puppet into two. Then, held out his hand to retrieve his sacred sword which was taken from him, the sacred sword rotated throughout the air and flew into Kouki’s hand.

Eri was expressionless, puppet soldiers were rushing at him but Kouki easily cut them into two. He shouldn’t be able to overcome the feelings of murder. However, right now with the intense fury of losing a comrade, he recognized that his opponents were already dead so there was no hesitation in his sword.

On the other hand, the front-lines group gathered around the other classmates and the fight to protect the stay-behind group began. No matter how many they took down they were still surrounded once again by puppet soldiers, there was also no time to remove the magic sealing shackles so their fight was based purely on physical strength. Ryutaro and Nagayama literally became a meat wall, they desperately tried to protect the stay-behind group which were trembling.

Shizuku desperately attempted to get to Kaori's place with a tearful expression. However, just like Ryutaro and them she was still in shackles, waves of puppet soldiers attacked and she wasn't able to easily advance ahead.

At that time, Kouki had finally beaten the puppet soldiers which surrounded him. With an angered look, Kouki glared angrily at Hiyama and Eri and quickly advanced.

But, there, Eri's trump card which took advantage of Kouki's weak point appeared. As a result, just as Eri predicted, Kouki's sword stopped.

Kouki called out towards that trump card in a shaking voice.

[It, it can't be…..even…Meld-san…..]

Right, the reason why Kouki's sword stopped in its place was because it was Meld Roginsu, leader of the knights.

[……Kouki…why, are you pointing your sword at me…I didn't teach you such things…]

[Na~…Meld-san…..I]

[Kouki! Don't listen! Meld-san has already-!]

Shizuku's voice scolded at Kouki who was shaken. When he regained his senses, Meld's sword was already approaching.

Immediately he used his sacred sword to receive the blow. Along with the terrific shockwave, Kouki legs shook*probably wrong but I think it's somewhat close? 光輝の足元に亀裂が走った*. It appears that the kingdom's strongest knight has had his limiter removed.

[……Meld-san……I'm sorry!]

Although Kouki's expression twisted in sorrow, he swung his sacred sword in intense waves towards Meld. Even while dead, Meld's swordsmanship was still great, he barely managed to get by Kouki's attacks while he used "Supremacy Dispersal". Because of Meld's appearance, Kouki's boiling head had cooled down a little, his sword attacks which ignored feelings of murder began to dull. However, even still Meld shouldn't be able to beat the current Kouki, finally Meld's sword was flung away.

Kouki instantly closed in and side swept at Meld's neck with his sacred sword.

But, before the sacred sword dug into Meld's neck,

[……..Help me…..Kouki]

[～!?]

Kouki's sword stopped unintentionally after hearing Meld's words. Even though it might be impossible, maybe, Meld might not have actually been killed and is only being manipulated? Isn't it still possible to help him? He was unable to throw away such thoughts.

This was Kouki's weak point. In short, it was half-heartedness. If you're going to help, then help. If you're going to kill, then kill. You can choose either one but resolution and determination are needed. Kouki had none of that. Based on the information presented to him, a convenient interpretation of the situation occured. That's why, though he usually doesn't doubt his righteousness, he loses himself at the most crucial times.

Meld used his foot to bounce up the knights sword which was on the ground. In an instant with the hand which gripped the sword, he once again crossed swords with Kouki. However, Kouki didn't have the overwhelming drive from awhile ago, rather Meld was the one who was pushing.

[~!? Gaha~!]

After somehow managing through Meld's attacks, Kouki's body lost its strength and his knees gave out. It was not due to the time limit of "Supremacy Dispersal". That much time hasn't passed by yet. The incident didn't stop with just that, finally he even began to vomit out loads of blood. The blood soaked into the ground and Kouki's confusion increased greatly.

[Fuu~, it's finally kicking in. It was quite the strong poison….as expected of Kouki-san. If I didn't prepare Meld-san I would have lost]

Towards Eri's relaxed voice, Kouki desperately tried to support up his body with a questionable expression.

[Kufufu, with the cause of the prince kissing the princess, if the princess kisses the prince he'll fall into a slumber (Killed) and become hers…..there's that kind of development as well right? Ma~a, even I have some preparations in case of emergencies~]

With those words Kouki had realised. The kiss that Eri gave him in the beginning. In that moment, she likely made both of them take in poison. Eri herself may have taken the antidote earlier. He never would have thought that he'd be fed poison through mouth-to-mouth. Let alone being able to imagine what someone in love would do. Kouki once again was reminded of the fact that the Eri that everyone had known was nowhere to be seen.

With the poisons effects, Kouki was completely unable to move, Eri laughed out satisfyingly and then turned around to walk towards Kaori once again. Because soon the time limit for "Bind Soul" will be over. Hiyama demanded Eri with an ogre-like form.

Kaori was dead and about to be defiled. With that Kouki and Shizuku were both furious with anger, and with a regretting expression Shizuku was about to charge straight in.

However, Eri had already placed her hand over Kaori. Eri began chanting the spell. After several tens of seconds, the Kaori puppet which will obey all of Hiyama's words will be completed. Shizuku and their expressions flared up in anger, Hiyama was laughing loudly, and Eri was smiling with a smirk.

Then……a voice which betrayed the battlefield that was filled with despair and betrayal sounded out.

[.....What the heck is going on?]

It was the boy with white hair and an eyepatch, Hajime Nagumo's voice.

Towards Hajime's appearance, as if time stopped, everyone's movements ceased. This was because Hajime's ferocious pressure was being emitted.

Normally the puppet soldiers which had no emotions shouldn't have stopped due to Hajime's pressure being released but, Eri who was their spiritualist was overwhelmed by the natural feeling of the weak instinctively concealing themselves as the strong came around which in turn caused the puppet soldiers to also do the same.

Hajime was completely unphased at the hundreds of eyes gazing at him and he began to check out the surrounding circumstances. A large amount of soldiers and knights were attacking his classmates, his classmates were grouped up and formed a circle, Meld was in front of Kouki who was on the ground and vomiting out blood, pounding her knee with a black katana in one hand was Shizuku, Eri and Hiyama who became stiff, and……Hiyama while embracing onto Kaori was holding onto the sword which secured that Kaori's life had ceased……

The moment he saw her appearance, an out-of-this-world terrifying presence instantly appeared at the plaza. As if insects were crawling throughout their entire body, inside it felt like their hearts were being clenched directly and left them uncomfortable, they

trembled frightenly against the presence. The presence of overwhelming death. It was exactly like their blood had frozen. For an instant their bodies lost its temperature and the heavy murderous intent made them envision their deaths.

In an instant, Hajime's appearance disappeared.

And Hajime who was moving at a pace which no one could comprehend had appeared besides Kaori with a roaring sound. The roaring sound was caused by Hiyama being flung back and ramming straight into the back wall of the plaza and destroying it. In an instant Hajime had kicked Hiyama in the chest and sent him flying without influencing Kaori at all.

Normally, one blow would be enough to cause Hiyama's entire body to burst apart, however because he held back a bit it only caused numerous bones to break and damage to the internal organs. By now he should have fainted in the wall, once he wakes up again from the pain, the hell would likely once again begin.

Hajime held up Kaori with one arm and cleared her face of her hair. Then, with a loud voice he called out to his comrade.

[Teio! I'm counting on you!]

[~.....Umu, leave it to me!]

[Shi, Shirasaki-san~!]

In response towards Hajime's request, Teio quickly rushed over

towards them. Aiko's complexion changes as she also came towards Kaori's side. Once Teio was handed Kaori by Hajime she quickly began chanting.

[Ahaha, it's useless. She's already dead. I would have never expected that you guys would be coming here…..no, the moment Kaori appeared I should have noticed. ……Un, it seems like it's already over for Hiyama, I'll give it to you? As long as you're not hostile against me, I'll bring Kaori back to life with magic for you. It wouldn't be genuine but, she'll stay pretty like now? It's better than rotting right? Ne?]

Radiantly, Eri proposed her suggestion while sweating from her forehead. Disregarding Aiko whose eyes were opened up widely in astonishment by his side, Hajime abruptly got up. Eri who knew of Hajime's strength, held out her hands as she clicked her tongue secretly while emphasizing that Kaori would just be rotting if left alone.

But, Hajime's overflowing murderous intent wasn't shaken one bit, expressionlessly like wearing a Noh mask he slowly walked towards Eri.

[Wait, wait a bit, Nagumo. Come on, look at the surrounding people? There's not much difference between them and the living? Although it can't be helped that she's dead, at the very least I could make her like them? Furthermore, I can create a Kaori that you like? For that you'll absolutely need me…..]

Eri was rapidly speaking as she backed away.

Then, at that time, a shadow was running up behind Hajime. A blow from a sharp spear which was uncomparable to the other puppet soldiers shot at him. The shadow's identity was Kondo Reiichi. It was the spear user that was pitifully killed by Eri earlier and turned into a puppet.

To begin with, although I say puppet, it still exhibited the strength of a cheat which came from a different world. The powerful thrust incorporated with Kondo's class "Spear Master*I think, it might just be spear user? 槍術師*" was spiraling with wind straight towards Hajime's heart.

[Ahaha, Carelessness is our greatest enemy～. As well as rage o-.....]

Eri's expression of impatience was quickly changed into one of a smirk but, as if Hajime didn't feel a thing he continued walking which caused her expression to cramp up. Hajime had probably already knew what was coming up from behind. A mass of red magical power was compressed to the size of a 10 yen coin and completely held off the spear which was thrusted out. It was the derivation of "Vajra", "Intensive Strengthening".

Hajime silently turned his left elbow towards his back and without any hesitation, he shot with his shotgun. A roaring sound resounded and at the same time, Kondo who received the attack of great power from super point-blank range in the face, had his head turned into small chunks and blown away. The sound of blood splattering and splashing around was heard clearly.

[～.....Kill him]

With a steep expression, Eri ordered the next puppet soldiers and Meld. Although not as much as Kouki, Hajime had held some intimacy with Meld, at the [Orcus Great Labyrinth] it was to the point of using a potion to heal him who was near death. Therefore, she intended to use the chance which exposes itself through hesitation just like it did with Kouki. The puppet soldiers were waiting eagerly for that opening to be exposed.

However, that kind of common-sense judgement won't work on Hajime.

While disregarding Meld who was coming at him, Hajime took out Metsurai from his "Treasure Warehouse". All of the sudden from out of no where, the form of brutal weapons appeared and caused everyone present to hold their breaths.

Immediately, Shizuku shouted out.

[Everyone! Lie down!]

Ryutaro and Nagayama while crouched down, dragged down students that were still standing onto the ground.

Immediately after that, with the unique rotation sound and shooting sound resounding out, the incarnation of destruction roared out. It was once used to completely crush all golems that the liberator manipulated, turned huge crowds of demons into a sea of blood, the fangs of the monster which offsetted even the

silver feathers of death which “God’s Apostle” shot out. That kind of thing was released, there was no way the puppet soldiers would be able to withstand it.

The electrically charged bullets weren’t lukewarm enough to just be said to have shot just one person, it went and broke through all obstacles, while blowing away the plaza wall as if it were just paper trash, with Hajime as the center, everything was being cut down. The puppet soldiers bodies were crushed, reduced into lumps of flesh which scattered around and could not be distinguished at all.

Before long, Metsurai’s roaring stopped and once again foot steps echoed in the silent plaza. Everyone who was laying down on the ground were motionless, naturally the one who was walking after the attack which mowed down everything in its path was Hajime.

Everyone else was similarly desperately lowering their heads until the storm passed by, the tip of shoes appeared in front of Eri’s eyes. Eri slowly raised her face. She glanced up at the owner of the shoes, what she saw there was a pair of eyes which looked at her as if she was just a pebble on the roadside without value. Hajime no longer carried Metsurai in his hands. He was simply standing above Eri and looking down on her.

Eri couldn’t say anything and only returned the gaze with an aghast expression, then Hajime slowly began to open his mouth.

[And?]

[～……..]

Hajime had no further information on what Eri had done. He just simply understood that she was an enemy. If it was simply an enemy then all he had to do was mercilessly murder it and everything would end. However, Eri had touched something which she should have never touched. It was already at the point where just killing her wasn't enough anymore. Before she died, she needs to feel "despair"……

That's why Hajime asked her a question. What else can you do? You can't do anything huh?

Eri accurately understood what he meant and began to tightly grit her teeth. The edge of her lip had a cut and blood was dripping down. Up until now she was the owner of this place, she should have been in the position with an overwhelming advantage, however, in an instant Hajime had unreasonably overturned that which caused her to hold hatred and awe.

The moment that Eri was about to unintentionally curse out passionately at him, the muzzle of a gun was suddenly pushed against her forehead.

Eri swallowed up her curses as the quick draw was so quick, she wasn't even able to comprehend when it was pulled out.

[……..Whatever your motive was, I have no intentions of hearing any of those worthless things. If you've got nothing left to show then…..die]

Hajime's finger began to pull on the trigger. The Hajime in Eri's eyes right now was someone who would murder his own classmates himself and realised that even if she had turned Kaori into a puppet he wouldn't have even hesitated.

------I'm dead.

Eri's head was completely filled up with those words. However, Eri's devilish luck seems to have not run out yet.

The moment when Eri's head was about to splatter, a flame bullet came flying towards Hajime. It's flames had a considerable amount of power in them. However, it obviously didn't work against Hajime. He turned Donner's muzzle towards the flame bullet and with pinpoint accuracy, he shot through it's core and it easily dispersed.

[Naaguumooo-!!]

From the interior of the dispersing flame bullet was Hiyama who was covered in wounds, and it was doubtful if he was capable of human speech anymore as he was calling out Hajime's name in an odd tone. With a sword in his hand, a large amount of blood being vomited out of his mouth, and his right shoulder broken and badly damaged which hung down as he aimlessly flung himself at Hajime. He no longer looked like an impudent ogre, now he only looked like some kind of ugly variant of a creature.

[.....Shut up]

Hajime braced himself like it was a hassle as Hiyama ran up and performed a worthless kick. Dogon~! an explosion sounding like a sonic boom resounded and Hiyama's body was floating in the air. He wasn't blown away because the shockwave wasn't allowed to leave his body.

Then as Hiyama was just floating in the air, Hajime lifted his leg up towards the sky, and swung it down with intense force. It was exactly like his heel drop was an axe swung down to chop firewood, it mercilessly struck Hiyama's head and threw him onto the ground. The ground cracked because of the impact and Hiyama's fresh blood from his head was splattering into those cracks. Hiyama who bounced up like a brick was already white eyed and lost his consciousness.

Anyone who saw him could see that he was already barely alive. However, Hajime had a quality which wouldn't let up. His bouncing head was once again kicked upwards to float in the air. Was something secretly carried out? With that impact, Hiyama regained his consciousness.

Hajime gripped Hiyama's neck and raised him up into the air. Hiyama who was hanging in midair was violently thrashing around without any power, Hajime who had inhumane strength was unphased.

[Yo"u! Iz not fo yo"u, Gaori wud, be mine!]

He was overflowing with grudge and murderous intent. It was shivering to think that a human could fall this low with ugliness.

Would an ordinary man divert his eyes away? They would likely be overcome by feelings of sickness and run away.

However, Hajime didn't show that kind of reaction towards Hiyama's. Rather on the contrary, Hajime's eyes held pitty.

[No matter if I existed or not, the results would have been the same. At the very least, with your nature nothing would have happened even if the world was overturned]*I think, お前が何かを手に入れられる事なん天地がひっくり返ってもねぇよ*

[Iz's yor fault]

[Don't place the blames on others. The reason you fell so low was your own fault. Even in Japan and over here, you were always the loser. not "someone else". it was "yourself". All you did was criticise everyone else in dissatisfaction while not shouldering anything for yourself. …..you're a genuine underdog]

[I'lr kill ju! Desinitely, jus you!]

Hiyama became further enraged and insane from Hajime's words. After Hajime looked at the underdog who continued to lose himself, he noticed something in the distance and looked towards it. What was over in that direction was the vanguard of demons who invaded the Kingdom.

Hajime returned his cold gaze onto Hiyama, then once again threw him up into the air, and with a blow from his artificial arm he hit where Hiyama was falling down according to gravity. Rotational force was applied in with the impact and Hiyama began rotating like a top.

[Let's test if you can survive or not. Ma~a, it's probably impossible for you]

Hajime also hammered him with a spinning kick which caused the air to be blown away. Hiyama let out an unpleasant sound and was blown outside of the plaza by the shockwave.

Rather than quickly shooting Hiyama to death, Hajime was unconsciously avoiding his vitals and pummeled him. It wasn't revenge for dropping him into the abyss, it was revenge for injuring Kaori.

Although he doesn't know the amount of awareness the actual person in question has, Hajime began to think that just killing him off comfortably wasn't enough. That was how he thought of the idea of kicking Hiyama into the crowd of demons after just barely keeping him alive.

However, due to dealing with Hiyama, the time he had to kill Eri was shortened. Although Eri didn't run away, an aurora was shot at Hajime.

[Chi….]

Hajime jumped back while clicking his tongue and used Donner to shoot where the aurora had come from. Three explosions roared out simultaneously, like a dragon climbing up the waterfall of aurora, 3 flashes tore through the sky.

Immediately afterwards, the aurora's trajectory bent, it nearly baked Kouki but, thanks to Eri they managed to evade somehow. Even for Eri, it would be a bad joke that she didn't want any part in if kouki was completely wiped out due to friendly fire.

Soon, the aurora calmed down and Freed descended down on his white dragon.

[……That's enough. Boy with white hair. If you don't want to lose anymore of your precious compatriots and Kingdom citizens, then settle down]

It appears that Freed was under the misconception that Hajime was fighting for Kouki and them and the Kingdom. If you looked around the surrounding area, you'd notice that demons had already surrounded Ryutaro and them, Shizuku, and aiming at Teio and Aiko.

If Hajime and them seriously fought back, there would be a great deal of collateral damage so they decided to take on hostages instead. Although Hajime doesn't know that Freed was already severely injured by Yue, Freed realized that and used this as a last resort. It should be noted that the wounds caused by Yue, although far from being completely healed, was healed by the white crow's inherent magic.

Then, at that time, as if something happened to Kaori, Teio called out loudly to Hajime.

[Master! I've somehow fixed it for now! However, any more than

this…..will take time….If possible, I'd like to have Yue's cooperation as well. We can't leave it as a temporary fix forever!]

Hajime nodded powerfully as he looked behind his shoulder at Teio. The classmates who didn't understand the circumstances had dubious expressions. However, Freed who also had Age of God's magic had somehow managed to guess, he looked at Teio's magic with wide eyes.

[Ho~o, new Age of God's magic…..by chance is it [Kamiyama's]? Then it would do you well to tell me of it's location. If you defy me then y-!?]

The moment that Freed tried to threaten Hajime and them for the location of [Kamiyama] great labyrinth, flames erupted from Donner. Immediately, the turtle-type demon set up a barrier and somehow managed to endure it from being fully destroyed. Freed narrowed his eyes and the surrounding demons closed in more.

[What's the meaning of this? Are your compatriots lives not important? The more you guys resist, the more the Kingdom's citizens will suffer as well? Or are you such a fool that you can't comprehend that? There are 100,000 monsters at the outer wall and on the other side of the gate is 1 million demons. No matter how strong you guys are, continuing to fight while protecting everything is…..]

Hajime who received those words, turned his cold eyes away from freed and towards the outside of the Kingdom---an army of 100,000 was trying to invade into the Kingdom. Then, he silently took out an induction stone which was the size of a fist out of his "Treasure Warehouse". He activated the induction stone while disregarding

Freed's dubious look and emitted a light which was uncomparable to the ring which manipulated the crossbitts.

Freed who started feeling an intense bad premonition, immediately shot an aurora at Hajime. However, Hajime's Donner kept them in check, as a result, he was able to activate the device.

----Light of condemnation poured down from the sky.

The pillar of light was the representative which connected the sky and the ground. Whatever it touched, no matter the race, sex, nor social class, everything was mercilessly destroyed and erased. Burning up the atmosphere and tearing through the darkness, as if it was the daylight, the sun's rays, the targets were mowed down.

Kyuwaa~aaaaaaa!!

The pillar of light as if investigating, let out a roar as it struck down onto the earth, the diameter was around 50 meters. Demons, Majinzokus, and living organisms alike were all evaporated under the light without exception, the shockwave and heatwaves were intensely scattering destruction on it's surroundings.

When Hajime poured magical power into the induction stone in his hand, the pillar of light moved through and mowed down all the demons and Majinzoku that were fleeing away on foot. Defending was useless. Evading was useless. That is unless you could travel through space like Freed, it would be impossible for organisms which ran on foot to get away. The demons and Majinzoku who were trying to invade at the outer wall saw the pillar of light

approaching and they all began to panic, they desperately tried to advance onwards into the Kingdom madly.

The pillar of light zigzagged along and trampled the huge army, everything up until the outer walls were eradicated and disappeared into the void.

All that was left was the smoke which rose from where the Earth was scorched and an enormous crater. As well as deep scars which were carved into the Earth. The Majinzoku who managed to just barely make it on time into the Kingdom(. . . .) weren't relieved, just, sitting down with their comrades in surprise that their army had completely vanished in an instant.

With that, Freed and Eri who were in front of him, Shizuku and everyone else as well, their thinking stopped and were just spacing out in utter amazement.

[The foolish one is you, you big fool. When exactly did I say that I was allied with the Kingdom and these guys here? Don't just selfishly categorize me with them. If you want a war, then go right ahead. However, if you get in my way just like now, I'll erase everything. Ma~a, I'm not free enough to waste my time on 1 million opponents though, this time around I'll let you off so hurry up with the remaining people and get lost. You're the commander of the army right?]

It was hard to object after his comrades were obliterated in an instant, Freed's eyes were dyed in rage and hatred. However, even if he created a gate and allowed his huge army to come through, he had no information on the pillar of light which Hajime shot, it would only cause to making the same mistakes once again. That

alone must be avoided at all costs.

Although it was vexing for Hajime as well to let them get away, right now it was necessary to treat Kaori as soon as possible. If time goes on, they'll lose the upper hand. Much like, doing something for the first time, he was completely winging it. Furthermore, the blow from the previous light was actually a weapon in its prototype stage, after that one shot it had already broken. Without the annihilation weapon, he'd have no time to deal with a million demons. It would be a bad idea to kill Freed who was the commander of the army.

Freed who doesn't know of that, bit down onto his lips and clenched his fists so hard with rage that it started bleeding, he was thinking that he could no longer continue sacrificing his people, and while opening up a gate, he replied back full of grudge.

[……I'll definitely repay this debt…..only you, in my God's name, I will definitely destroy you!]

As Freed was turning back, he glanced at Eri to urge her to get onto the white dragon. Eri looked at Kouki who was surviving due to his strong status and smiled at him with a smile filled with obsessiveness and insanity. Even without words you'd know, it was the look that was filled with will of obtaining Kouki no matter what.

At the same time that Freed and Eri who were on the white dragon passed through the gate, 3 bursts of magic bullets lit up and roared through the sky. It was probably a retreat signal. At the same time, Yue and Shia came down from the sky with great force.

[……N, Hajime. Where's that ugly man?]

[Hajime-san. Where's that scoundrel?]

It appears that both of them came chasing after Freed to beat him. They probably already knew that the pillar of light was due to Hajime so they didn't ask.

However, right now they don't have the time to deal with those simple matters. Hajime told Yue and Shia about Kaori's death. Both of them opened their eyes up in surprise. However, after looking at Hajime's eyes which contained spirit, they immediately recovered.

And then Hajime asked for Yue's help with his eyes. Yue accurately understood what she needed to do and with few powerful words, […..N, leave it to me], she nodded.

They turned around and rushed towards Teio. Then Hajime held onto Kaori in a princess carry position and intended to leave the plaza straight away. However just then, Shizuku called out to Hajime while staggering with a desperate expression.

[Nagumo-kun! Kaori is, about Kaori…….what should…..I…..]

Shizuku seemed to have been exhausted to a state which was never seen before, with such a grievous expression, if left alone she may suffer from mental illnesses. During battle her tensed heart was able to support her, however now that that's gone, she's probably

being tormented by the pain of her best friends death.

Hajime entrusted Kaori to Shia and told her to go ahead with Teio. Yue and them who sympathized with Shizuku's expression left the plaza while being guided by Teio.

His classmates were still in a state of being unable to move, Hajime went and dropped to a knee before Shizuku who was sitting like a girl with her head dropped. And with both hands sandwiching Shizuku's cheeks, he forced her to look up until their sights aligned.

[Yaegashi, don't break. Believe in us and wait. I'll let you two meet again without fail]

[Nagumo-kun…..]

Shizuku's eyes which had lost it's light, only a bit but, power had returned. Then and there Hajime laughed while saying things which sounded like a joke.

[If Yaegashi becomes like this, who'll take care of all the troublesome things in the future? What'll happen if Kaori saw a broken Yaegashi……please give me a break? I'm not a problem loving human like Yaegashi]

[…..Who's the problem loving human, baka. ……Believing that…..is fine right?]

Hajime smiled with an earnest expression and nodded firmly.

Up close, Shizuku was staring into Hajime's shining eyes and she understood that he was serious. He was seriously trying to do something about Kaori who should already be dead. Within those strong willed eyes, Shizuku felt that her frozen heart melted a bit.

The light within Shizuku's eyes further increased. And just like Hajime did, she nodded powerfully. Then the will to believe in Hajime and them appeared from within.

After confirming that Shizuku's risk of breaking down mentally has lowered drastically, Hajime removed a test tube container out of the "Treasure Warehouse" and placed it in Shizuku's hands.

[This is….]

[Let the other childhood friend drink it. He's in quite the bad shape]

After Hajime's words, Shizuku glanced towards Kouki who was laying on the ground. Kouki had already lost consciousness, he was visibly weakened. She recalled that the holy water which Hajime handed her was once used to immediately heal meld who was about to die, and presumed that it was the most effective medicine out of all other medicine. As for Hajime, he'd be troubled if Shizuku broke down if Kouki dies even after he said all that he did to her….after looking at Shizuku's expression it appears that she was more thankful than expected.

When Shizuku tightly grasped the container of holy water, she looked at Hajime with moistened eyes and said words of thanks,

[……Thank you, Nagumo-kun]. As soon as Hajime received those words of thanks he immediately turned around. Then he started chasing after Yue and them like the wind.

Later in the Kingdom

This is not meant to be a perfect translation, I cannot read japanese characters and this was carefully edited based on translations I got from my Machine Translator. Therefore, there are bound to be errors here and there! At best, this could be considered as an unedited Final Draft towards an Official Translation

After Hajime left the plaza, Shizuku made Kouki drink the holy water and he recovered in no time.

The puppet soldiers that Eri had, numbered up to 500 people and out of that It seems that 300 were turned into minced meat at the plaza by Hajime. Most likely the missing soldiers went with Freed through the gate into Majinzoku territory.

Although it was later found out in investigations that magic formations were created from huge magic stones which were buried in the earth on the outskirts of the Kingdom, that appears to have been the secret to Freed being able to transfer his military.

Also, it appears that the King and other influential leaders were all killed by Eri's puppet soldiers, currently, the seat of King within the Hairihi Kingdom was open. Until the confusion subsides, Ririana and the safe queen, Ruruaria, will be taking the lead in the Kingdom's reconstruction. Most likely, once they've settled down, prince Randell who was also safe, will be ascending to the throne.

The number one cause of confusion was that there was no communication with the church.

Even though the Kingdom has turned into such an amazing state, widespread uneasiness and distrust was spreading throughout the followers as the church didn't appear during or after the war at all. The truth was, everyone related to the church were already blown to smithereens by the explosion at the head temple! If the citizens heard about that, what would they think? A boy with white hair somewhere held slight interest in that question.

Also, the pillar of light which annihilated the Majinzoku's large army was, "Ehitto-sama's" light of condemnation which was released in order to save the Kingdom! is what the rumors that have been circulating says, it was an incredibly painful story that their faith was further strengthened. Hajime was wondering if he should spread rumors that it was due to the "Goddess of Fertility" once again, however, if Aiko heard of that she'd likely suffer to no end in her mind.

People began to wonder of the reason why the church wasn't coming down from [Kamiyama], and naturally, they wanted to climb up to find out. However, there was far too much to be done for the reconstruction of the Kingdom, so there wasn't anyone to go up 8,000 meters above ground. By the way, because Hajime and them stopped the lift, the only way to reach the head temple was by scaling up the mountain.

Also, Hiyama's remains were found a little distance away from the plaza. His body was consumed and messed up here and there, after being completely beaten up by Hajime and blown out of the plaza, sure enough, he was attacked by demons.

It was thought that he was still alive when he got consumed because it appears that there were traces of intense resistance. In particular, his left arm was completely missing, judging from the

traces of blood, with his left arm consumed first, he ran desperately for his life and then the side of his body was then eaten which caused him to die. If you tried to imagine it, it was likely one of the worst ways to die.

With that, a variety of things turned up and 5 days have passed since the betrayal and death of their friends from the Majinzoku's invasion.

Its needless to say anything about Suzu who was on good terms with Eri, but the classmates who were caught up in her obsession and insanity suffered deep mental wounds. After Hiyama and Kondo's deaths, Nakano and Saito who was always together with them became hikikomori's.*Google if you don't know the term*

Along with those who sustained deep mental wounds, Kouki and them were asked by Ririana and them to lend their powers in reconstructing the Kingdom in order to recuperate and recover, since that day Hajime and them had not shown up so they were frequently looking back at that.

All members of the front lines and Ai-chan bodyguards should have known of Hajime's powers but they still didn't know of the overwhelming power of the pillar of light which annihilated the large army, once again, they were forced to feel their difference in power.

Because Kouki and them knew of that, they took on less shock than the stay-behind group. Although they heard of Hajime's power from the returning members, they now knew that they had only understood 1/10,000 of Hajime's true terrifyingness. Anyone and everyone could do nothing but be concerned about Hajime, his

comrades, and Kaori who he took with him.

And the remarkable one was Shizuku. Although she's doing exactly what needs to be done, once in a while she'll stare off into the distance with eyes that seem to be looking for something in her heart. It was clear to everyone that she was thinking of Kaori, the classmates who witnessed Kaori's death were unsure of what to say about it

From the talk that Hajime had with Shizuku, it seemed to have been something about Kaori coming back but, they were skeptical as the task of reviving a dead person was likely impossible and because of that they weren't able to comfort themselves.

They suspected that it was probably something just like how Eri did, she'll be brought back as a doll, in that case, it was easy to imagine that Shizuku would become further damaged because of that, especially Kouki who had always cautioned himself as he watched Hajime and them.

Kouki himself was extremely down that he was unable to do anything once again and saved twice by Hajime, the fact that Kaori left him for Hajime (Kouki recognized it within himself) was also added in, he wasn't able to hold any good feelings for Hajime.

It was, the so-called "Jealousy", however Kouki himself was not aware of it. It wouldn't be easy for him to admit it even if he had noticed it. If he recognised it, whether he moves forwards or looks away out of convenience……depends all on himself.

Both Kouki and Shizuku couldn't be said to have been in bright states, because Ryutaro is a muscle-for-brains he's not reliable, and

all classmates were depressed in general.

At times like these, it would usually be Suzu's time to show her abilities as a mood-maker and brighten things up but, without a question the actual person is in low tensions, the smiles that shes shown occasionally were painful. It seems to be majorly due to what Eri had said to her. It's understandable. Throughout many years, the person who was thought to have been her best friend had only thought of her on the level of being a convenient tool.

Even still, the entire class hasn't completely fallen, the only person moving in order to reconstruct the Kingdom single-mindedly was probably only Aiko.

Aiko was also worried about Kaori, if she could, she'd do anything but, when weighed against what Hajime and them were trying to do, with Yue and Teio there she understood that she had no turn. That's why she couldn't neglect the students who remained damaged on the ground and decided to stay.

Because Aiko firmly had 1 on 1 communications with her students and encourage all of her students to work to their potentials, they were able to move on now.

By the way, Aiko had obviously known what had happened to the Church, although she knows more about it than anyone else, she stubbornly sealed her lips.

That was in order to not obstruct Hajime and them, and at the same time, every time she remembers what she had done, her

mouth becomes heavier. Even if it was an unexpected result, her resolution to go through with it was true. That's why, when Hajime and them came back, she planned on telling Ririana and them the truth……police officer, it's me.

Although Aiko seemed to be behaving brightly, on the inside, she was trembling in fear. She herself aided Teio in the obliteration of the church, if the students had known that she was involved in the blast which killed Ishstar and them and the Knights then, what exactly would they think of her?

She fought because she was resolute to not allow her students to become toys of war any longer, although she doesn't regret about that matter, a murderer is a murderer. She was surely already prepared that her students would no longer call her sensei.

It should be noted that David and them, the Aiko bodyguard temple knights, were still alive and well. That was because after Aiko had disappeared, they protested to the upper brass, "Let us meet her!", many times, and after that was confirmed to never be fulfilled they decided to search for themselves, the upper brass who were fed up decided to lowered them onto ground level and restricted them from going into the head temple. And that's how they managed to barely escape from death at the head temple at the time. Currently they're listening to Aiko's words and working hard to help out with this and that for the reconstruction.

With those kinds of feelings, Aiko and the students are respectively holding their own weight in their minds and helping out with Ririana today to reconstruct the Kingdom.

Today's agenda was to reform the Kingdom's knights and employ

commanders to each squad at the drilling ground. By the way, the new knight leader's name was Kuzeri Rail. It was a female knight and formerly Ririana's imperial guardsmen. The vice-commander's name was Neat Komorudo. He was the previous commander of the 3rd knight unit.

[Thanks for the hard work. Kouki-san]

During the mock battle screening test, Kouki had been working as a partner for the knights so he was wiping his sweat at the edge of the drilling grounds and those words of appreciation ranged out. When Kouki turned his line of sight towards it, Ririana was coming over with a smile.

[No, this isn't much of a big deal. …..As for yourself Riri, you've barely gotten any sleep recently huh? Really, thanks for the hard work]

When Kouki showed a wry smile in return, Ririana also showed a wry smile. Both of them hardly had any time to sleep over the past few days. To begin with, the reason why their sleeping time was cut down was due to completely different reasons.

[That's because right now is not the time to be sleeping. …..Casualties, dealing with the loss of beloved people, disposing buildings which collapsed, confirming missing people, repairing the great barrier and the outer wall, reports and communication with each district, deploying soldiers to investigate the surroundings, reorganizing…..this is serious, they're all things that need to be done. Even if I whine about it, there's no other way. Mother has also shared the burden, so I can still go on. …….The people who are truly suffering are those who lost important people and their

property…….]

[If you're saying that then, even you've…..]

From what Ririana had said, Kouki tried to point out that even she's lost the King which was her father but, even if he said it, nothing would change, so he shut his mouth. Riri sympathized with Kouki's feelings and said, [I'm fine], with a smile once again, then changed the topic.

[How's Shizuku holding out?]

[……She hasn't changed. Usually its the same usual Shizuku but, without noticing it she looks up above for a long time]

As Kouki was saying so, he glanced towards Shizuku who was talking with Kuzeri at the center of the drilling grounds.

The two were probably friends through Ririana, they seemed to be discussing something rather intimately. However, the conversation was suddenly interrupted, and naturally her eyes glanced upwards, in other words, you could tell she was looking towards the top vicinity of [Kamiyama].

[She's…..waiting for them huh]

[That's right. …..Being honest, the thing that Nagumo said is too...untrustworthy...although I'd like for Shizuku and them to meet…*I think? this lines one of those lines where I get confused as to what they're really saying, 雫には会って欲しくないと思ってるんだけどね*]

Ririana had a slightly surprised expression as she turned her glance from Shizuku to Kouki. Kouki's expression had a complicated color, it was clear that what he said was not according to what he thought. Jealousy, suspicion, fear, pride, gratitude, antipathy, various feelings were mixed in impatiently, his expression was difficult to express.

Ririana couldn't find the right words to say to Kouki, she looked up towards the top of [Kamiyama] where Hajime and them should be.

The sky was clear, it's as if the crisis of extinction from a few days ago never happened. That sky looked as if it was in a happy-go-lucky mood, Ririana held slightly bitter feelings towards it and continued looking up at the sky.

Then at that time, she began to see a few black dots in the sky. With a doubtful look Ririana narrowed her eyes and she noticed that those black dots were gradually growing bigger, she noticed that something was falling down and panickingly she called out to Kouki by her side.

[Ko, Kouki-san! There! Isn't something falling down!]

[Eh? What are you suddenly….~, everyone! Watch out! Something's coming from above!]

Ririana's attitude surprised Kouki but, as he looked up in the sky, he confirmed that something was definitely falling down, [Get down, it's an enemy attack!], he warned out loudly with an impatient expression.

Shizuku and them were panicking and quickly evacuated the drilling grounds and went beside Kouki and them, simultaneously something landed onto the drilling grounds.

Zudo~oon!!

The earth trembled when whatever was falling crashed, as the dust clouds danced about, what appeared from it was……Hajime, Yue, Shia, and with Teio it was 4 people.

[Nagumo-kun!]

The first one to take off was Shizuku. Exactly like Hajime said, she believed in them and waited. Having excess momentum was unavoidable. However, within Hajime and them, Kaori's appearance was no where to be seen, her expression gradually became uneasy and darkened.

[Yo~o, Yaegashi. Are you living properly]

[Nagumo-kun…..where's Kaori? Why is Kaori not here?]

Shizuku relaxed somewhat after Hajime's joke, however it was the truth that Kaori was not in front of her, as expected, it must have been too hard to overturn Kaori's death, she was already unable to hide her uneasiness and asked in a trembling voice.

On the other hand, Hajime had an indescribably vague expression.

[Ah~, she'll be here soon? It's just that.....her appearance may have changed a tiny~ bit.....because of that see, it'll be troubling if you placed the blame on me, un, it's not my fault so don't get mad?]

[Eh? Wait a bit. What? What is? It makes me extremely uneasy though? What do you mean? What did you do to Kaori? Depending on the circumstance, with the black katana that you gave me.....]

Towards Hajime's words which only further fanned the flames of uneasiness, Shizuku's highlight in her eyes disappeared and she slowly began to extend her black katana on her waist. [Dudu], Hajime was suppressing Shizuku, suddenly, they began to hear a scream from the sky.

[Kyaaaa!! Hajime-k~un! Catch me~!!]

When Shizuku and them were wondering what it was and looked up, they saw something with a silver shadow falling down at blistering speeds.

With Shizuku's excellent kinetic vision, she saw a woman with silver hair and blue eyes who had the beauty that could compete with a beautiful work of art that a historically named artist produced, and against her cool appearance, she was falling down while awkwardly flinging her arms and legs with tears in her eyes and a miserable expression.

The silver haired, blue eyed woman came straight down plunging towards Hajime. From her eyes you could see that she trusted that

she would be caught.

But, betraying such things were Hajime's quality. In the place where he was supposed to catch her, the moment before they collided he suddenly jumped back, [Eh?], his glance averted from the womans eyes and she crashed into the ground as if she was being consumed by the earth while becoming dot eyed.

Everyone had trembling expressions as they looked towards Hajime who had no intentions of catching her, [She's dead right?]. However, after the sand of cloud cleared up again, the beautiful woman with silver hair and blue eyes appeared, Aiko and Ririana both raised out a warning-like scream.

[Wha, why, are you……]

[Everyone! Get back! She's a dangerous person who kidnaped Aiko and lent Eri a hand!]

Towards those words, Kouki and all the other classmates at the spot, Kuzeri and all of the other knights all simultaneously picked up their weapons. Especially Shizuku who was close to Hajime and them who immediately prepared to performed a quick draw on the spot, she had piercing eyes filled with murderous intent for the person who had lent a hand in Kaori's death. If an opening appeared, she would immediately cut her down.

Towards the other party which glared at her, Nointo who had a pretty face like a work of art and silver hair with blue eyes, as if she didn't suffer any damage at all from the crash, moved agilly and easily stood up. Then for a moment she glanced at Hajime with reproachful eyes, and unbelievably she who had no emotions or

expressions like a machine now carried them and panickingly she spoke towards Shizuku.

[Wa, wait! Shizuku-chan! It's me, me!]

[?]

Shizuku had a suspicious expression towards the woman who called her name on their first meeting appealing for themself.

Hajime who was by the side muttered out, [you look like shady scammer……], the woman Ki'ed! at him with a glare then looked away. It was impossible for Aiko and them to not think of her as an enemy. Although the appearance and voice was different, the strange woman's casual gestures and atmosphere when calling out for herself was like a shadow of her best friend.

While gently relaxing her quick draw position, she spaced out and suddenly muttered the name of her best friend.

[……Kao, ri? Are you….Kaori?]

Was she extremely glad that Shizuku had noticed that it was her? The silver haired blue eyed woman had a bright face! and replied in a lively bright voice.

[Un! I'm Kaori! Shizuku-chan's best friend, Shirasaki Kaori. Although my appearance has changed…..I'm properly living!]

[……Kaori…..Kaori~i!]

Shizuku was stunned for a bit. Although she has no idea how things turned out the way they did, even still, with the fact that her best friend was still alive and in front of her, finally soaking in, she embraced Kaori who had obtained a new body of a silver haired blue eyed woman with all her might as she cried out tears like rain.

Kaori was also sobbing like a baby and like Shizuku she embraced her back tightly and quietly whispered gently.

[I'm sorry to have worried you? I'm fine now, I'm fine]

[Hi~gu, gusu~, I'm glad, so glad~]

They both buried their faces in each others necks and Shizuku and Kaori firmly confirmed each other's existence.

Everyone who saw it was completely stunned, for a while, the cries of warmth and tenderness resounded throughout the drilling grounds.

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[So then, what exactly does this mean?]

With eyes dyed red and swollen from tears, Shizuku's cheeks also
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blushed with the same amount of shame, and determined to hide her shame she demanded an explanation of the circumstances.

The current location has switched from the drilling grounds to the large room where Kouki and them usually eat at. In regards to Shizuku, it was explained that at heart she was Kaori and the body belonged to someone named Nointo, for the time being Ririana urged that they move to a calmer place. However, it wasn't only Shizuku who came, all classmates as well as Aiko and Ririana are attending.

[Well, lets see….cutting straight to the chase. Using magic, Kaori's soul was protected, Nointo's corpse? Remains? Ma~a, we restored it and took it over]

[I see…..I don't get it at all]

Shizuku just stared at hajime as he gave off his extremely simple explanation. From the stare, it was clearly saying, [Is that all there is to it? Ahh?], with an insecure look. In place of Hajime who had an expression that his motivation for explaining was 0, Kaori decided to explain with an amazed expression.

[Ehhto ne, Shizuku-chan. You know that the magic we're using now a degraded version of the forgotten magic from the past called Age of Gods magic right?]

[……Yes. I've studied some of this world's history. Its the magic that appears in the myth about how this world was created? Rather than the current attribute magic, they were more fundamental in useage……wait. Do you mean to say that it's that kind of thing? The Age of Gods magic that Nagumo and you guys have is the spirit type…..a power that allows you to interfere with a person's soul? With that, the spirit of the dead Kaori was protected and

settled in a different body right?]

[Right! As expected of Shizuku-chan]

For some reason, Kaori was sticking out her chest proudly. In fact, the rate of Shizuku's brain being able to process things was fast. Hajime had also known of this before but, inside of himself, he was once again impressed.

[But, why in that body? Was Kaori's body no longer alright? I thought that you guys could somehow manage to heal up the wound that was inflicted on her heart with recovery magic though……]

[Ahh, the truth is, Kaori's body is completely healed and it was possible to return her soul to it]

Spirit magic was mind-blowing Age of Gods magic where you can literally stay immortally young through continuously fixating your own soul.

By "fixating" it was magic which preserved the dead spirit that was interfered with in order to not allow it to deteriorate nor disappear, at first, this was what Teio performed on Kaori. However, it was lucky that Teio made it on time because it's ineffective if several minutes have passed since death.

By "establishing", just as it says, regardless of the fixated spirit, they'll be established whether its as organic or inorganic matter. Bodies which have started decaying would still cause them to die once again even if they establish themselves because it won't be suitable for survival, however, it'll be possible with a healthy body,

it's also possible to leave the wedge of time and become immortal like Miredei Raisen who established herself as a golem.

Obviously this magic isn't so simple that it can be done without proper testing and training. It was successful precisely because Yue and Teio were naturally talented at magic. Even still, it took 5 whole days to properly establish.

[Then, why…..what happened to Kaori's original body? There must have been some kind of problem then?]

[Shizuku-chan, calm down. I'll explain it properly]

While calming down Shizuku, Kaori continued to explain.

At first, Hajime had attempted to return Kaori's spirit back into her original body which they've healed with Reproduction magic.

However, the one who told him to wait was Kaori. Even while stuck in a spirit state, "Spirit Guidance" can be conducted to communicate with the soul. Kaori who was still in a spirit state, had heard of Meiredi Raisen and requested that she be placed into a golem like her. If it was Hajime, then he should be able to create a powerful golem.

At [Merujine Underwater Ruins], Kaori had realised her own powerlessness, she had no intentions to stay the way that she was now. She also had no intentions to give up standing next to Hajime as well. At that point, she knew that she would easily be killed. Cowardly, miserably, and mortifyingly……if so then, she thought,

“what if I tossed away my human body”.

Once Kaori was resolute on something, she became surprisingly stubborn. Although Hajime and them had tried to talk her out of it, she wouldn’t listen. That determination was so strong it made Hajime raise out both hands in surrender.

With no other choice, Hajime had decided to create the strongest golem he could, however, suddenly the light bulb inside of Hajime’s head lit up! [I can use that can’t I?]. Right, it was Nointo who Hajime had pierced through the heart.

After Hajime recovered Nointo’s remains, Yue used Reproduction magic to restore all the wounds. The strong body of “God’s Apostle” had become Kaori’s new vessel, it was a great success when “establishing” the soul to it.

Unfortunately, although the organ-like magic stone which supplied an infinite supply of magical power was reproduced, it was not functioning, however, Nointo’s inherent magic “Decomposition”, her dual wielding swords and skills, silver wings and feathers were useable.

It appears that Nointo’s body remembers all previous combat experiences and knows how to use it, although she’s unable to fly right now because the body is still new, once she gets accustomed to it, she’ll likely be able to exert “God’s Apostle’s” true abilities. Now that she can directly manipulate magic, she’s well qualified to be shoulder to shoulder with Hajime and them.

Kaori who was happy that her spirit was successfully established onto the body was an incredibly amazing sight. After all, she had

the appearance of a cool beauty and she was making a fuss with “Kya, Kya” noises and a big smile. The opponent which Hajime was just fighting with not too long ago was making such a happy face and in addition she was clinging onto him, as expected, even Hajime didn’t know this would happen and his eyebrows turned into a /\.

By the way, Kaori’s real body was being stored in the “Treasure Warehouse” while receiving Yue’s freezing treatment. A beauty frozen in ice created a very mysterious feeling. Since cells that are ruined after being thawed out can be restored by Reproduction magic, if she wanted to go back to her body, the possibility of it is extremely high.

[.....I see. Ha～a, Kaori, you’ve always been a bit spontaneous since a long time ago but this time supases all of those]

After hearing Hajime’s explanation, Shizuku placed a hand on her head to suppress her headache. Her headache was worse than the time when she was asked what Hajime’s favorite game was so she visited the game store, only to have mistakenly charge into the X-rated game corner.

[Ehehe, sorry for worrying you Shizuku-chan]

[.....It’s fine. As long as you’re still alive then……]

Shizuku said while smiling at Kaori who had an apologetic expression, then she suddenly straightened her posture and changed her expression to a serious one, then turned towards Hajime and them and bowed her head.

[Nagumo-kun, Yue-san, Shia-san, Teio-san. Thank you very much for saving my best friend. Although my debts are continuously increasing and I have nothing I can return in exchange…..I'll never forget this favor throughout my life. If there's anything I can do, then feel free to ask. I'll do my best to respond to it]

[…….You're as honest as ever. Ma~a, don't mind it so much. We just helped out our own companion]

Shizuku showed a wry smile towards Hajime's light reply. It wasn't just Kaori, they were all saved as well. There lives were saved twice at that. Even after being saved from their predicaments, most likely the results of the clash was convenient for Hajime's own circumstances as well, his state of mind was already something that you could only laugh at how different it was.

And, somehow the calm mood also had a hint of spitefulness in it as well, Shizuku sharply pointed out.

[…….Considering all that, although you were also worried about me, you gave me the medicine for Kouki's sake right?]

[If you had broken then Kaori would have been troublesome….]

[Trou, troublesome you say……that's mean, Hajime-san]

Replying to Shizuku's sarcastic remark, Kaori's tsukkomi also came through, [besides….], Hajime continued.

[Just like a certain Sensei has said, I should not walk down the

“Lonely life”. Though I can’t afford to pay attention to everything, if it’s just this much then……]

[! Nagumo-kun……]

Aiko who had kept silent while Shizuku and Hajime and them had their conversation, looked towards Hajime with moistened eyes that were overwhelmed by emotions due to Hajime’s words.

The other students were strangely admiring that Ai-chan’s teachings properly reached Hajime who had become overly haughty, it seems that Aiko was more impressed than they were though, Shizuku and Yue and them sensitively felt that some other kind of heat was also included in Aiko’s eyes.

Kaori appearance was like, “It can’t be!”, asking for confirmation, she lined her sight with Shizuku and Yue and them, Yue and them nodded with a sharp look while Shizuku averted her eyes and looked up towards the sky.

Shizuku sensed that a delicate atmosphere was beginning to build up and decided to continue talking in order to return the atmosphere back to normal. There were a mountain of things that she still wanted to ask.

[On that day, the day when Sensei was kidnaped, can we hear what you wanted to tell us that day? That talk surely had some kind of relation with Nagumo-kun and them who acquired Age of Gods magic right?]

Hajime heard Shizuku's words and turned his gaze over to Aiko. Silent pressure hung over Aiko to explain the situation. while clearing out her throat, ~Kohon~, Aiko began to explain Hajime's purpose for traveling, and, she began to explain about everything from the events when she was held at the head temple and when the Kingdom was invaded.

After she finished explaining everything, the first person to raise their voice was Kouki.

[What's with that. Then, are you saying that we're just dancing on the palm of God's hand? Then why didn't you tell us about it sooner! You could have told us when we met up again at Orcus!]

With a criticising look and voice, however, Hajime only glanced at Kouki as if he was troublesome and didn't say anything. He was ignored. Towards that attitude, Kouki got up from his seat with a ~gata!~ noise and was filled with hostility towards Hajime.

[How about saying something! If you had told me about it sooner then!]

[Wait a bit, Kouki!]

Shizuku's urge wasn't heard, Hajime frowned annoyingly at Kouki who had lost his temper, after letting out a grand sigh, he looked towards Kouki as if he was bothersome.

[If I had said it, would you have believed me?]

[What was that?]

[At any rate, you're a person who loves to believe in your convenient interpretations. Would the large majority of people believe that God has "gone mad" when told so, I knew it would have been meaningless to tell you about it, far from believing in me, rather, you'd criticize me instead? That kind of scene comes to mind]

[Bu, but, if you had explained it clearly repeatedly then….]

[Are you stupid. Why do I have to go through bone breaking stakes for your guys sakes? Surely you're not expecting that just because I'm your classmate, that I'll naturally lend my power right? ……Saying such foolishness is just like……a second Hiyama?]

Towards Hajime's glare which was like permanently frozen ground, all of the classmates averted their eyes.

But, It seemed that Kouki wasn't convinced and continued to stare severely at Hajime. Kouki didn't notice that Yue who was next to Hajime was looking at him with fed up eyes declaring, you've been saved twice so why are you still behaving like this.

[But, If we're to fight God together from now on…….]

[Wait, wait, Hero (Laughs). When did I say I was going to fight God? Don't just decide it on your own. Naturally I'll kill them if they come from the other side but, I have no intentions of going around to search for them? Because I just want to go through all great labyrinths and quickly return home to Japan]

Kouki's eyes opened up widely when those words were said.

[Na~, surely you don't mean to say that whatever happens to the people of this world is alright are you!? If we don't do something about God, people will continue being his plaything from now and onwards! Are you going to abandon them!]

[I'm not willing to use my powers for the sake of someone who's face I don't even know…..]

[Why…..just why! Aren't you stronger than us! If you have that much power then you should be able to do anything! If you have power then shouldn't you use it for the right things!]

Kouki was howling. As always, his words were overflowing with justice. However, such "words" were against the person's will to begin with, they didn't reach Hajime. Hajime looked at Kouki as if he was a stone on the roadside.

[……if "you have power" huh. That's exactly why you'll always be groveling on the ground. ….I believe that power should be used with clearly defined intentions. You don't do something because you have power. Because you want something you use power. If you're saying that just because "you have power" you have to do it regardless of your will then, that's probably nothing more than a "curse". that will is too feeble. ……Or rather, I have no intentions of arguing about which path you and I take. Anything more about this will be annoying so I'll seriously send you flying]

After Hajime said that, his eyes returned to normal as if he had no interest in Kouki and them.

From his attitude, Hajime was serious about himself and the world, Kouki realised that it wasn't out of a grudge nor hatred, he simply

had no interest. After the reason why he lost was said out, he kept quiet while shaking violently. I have a strong will!, he wanted to object, but, for some reason those words wouldn't come out.

The other classmates as well, somehow understood that Hajime coming back and teaming up with them again was nothing but a dream, and, they trembled violently when they thought that they might seriously end up like Hiyama if they said things poorly.

After all, even though they were just puppets, their opponent was someone who held no hesitation and turned all the knights including Meld into chunks of meat. As for the stay-behind group, they couldn't even look Hajime in the eye after he fell into hell.

[……As expected, you won't be staying around? I wanted you to at least stay until the defense system for the Kingdom was repaired…..]

The person who requested it was Ririana.

As of now, confusion is still within the Kingdom, although the magic formation which allowed large-scale transfer was removed, they were still in a state where it was unknown when the Majinzoku would be attacking once again so Hajime and them were an existence which they didn't want to part with. Freed who seemed to be the other parties general only withdrew because Hajime was here. With just Hajime and them being here, they were already a kind of repellent.

[Since things were already established with God's Apostle, I want

to hurry up ahead. Resurrecting Kaori took 5 days as well. I plan on leaving tomorrow]

Though Ririana's shoulders dropped, after Hajime and them had left, there was no way of stopping Freed and them so as a princess she needed to hold onto them.

[Is there anything……at least, that pillar of light……that's also one of Nagumo-san's artifacts right? Can you allow us to use it for the Kingdom's protection? ……I'll do everything I can to reward you for it, so]

[……Ah, "Hyuberion" huh. It's impossible. That thing broke after the first blow….it was a prototype after all. If I don't improve it, then]

Hajime's annihilation weapon "Hyuberion" that erased the huge army of demons and Majinzoku was in short, a sunlight convergence laser. Before going down [Kamiyama] he flew up to retrieve it.

"Hyuberion" was an enormous airframe lens which converged sunlight, it can also charge itself while inside of the "Treasure Warehouse" which had heat capacity installed in it. Enormous heat which critically overflowed from the "Treasure Warehouse" would be discharged through the launching entrance where gravity magic was added in to make it discharge towards the ground.

And "Hyuberion's" biggest feature was the fact that it could still converge the sunlight even while it was night. It's secret was due to Oscar Orcus's false sun which lightened up his rooms. That thing's sunlight was created through Reproduction magic along with Space

magic, it was through collaboration with the “liberators” who combined their Age of Gods magic as Hajime couldn’t understand at first.

Even the Hajime as of now is still unable to create a fake sun. Plus “Hyuberion” was still in it’s experimental stage as well, it wasn’t able to withstand it’s own heat and broke down, so it can no longer shoot anymore. To begin with, “Hyuberion” wasn’t the only annihilation weapon that Hajime had created but…….

[Is that…..so…..]

After hearing Hajime’s words, once again Ririana’s shoulders drops down. There, Kaori, Shizuku, and Aiko pierced Hajime with glares. The 3 people already know of Hajime’s stance. Although Hajime did say that he’ll consider people in his surroundings to some extent, fundamentally, the fact that he’s indifferent about this world doesn’t change. Reaching out towards the surroundings was so that sadness wouldn’t indirectly reach Yue and them. That’s why the 3 people didn’t actually say anything. They don’t but their persuasiveness were shown in their eyes.

Although Hajime had been ignoring them while drinking his tea, he let out a murmur because they were so persistent.

[.....Before we leave, I’ll at least fix the Great Barrier]

[Nagumo-san! Thank you very much!]

Hajime ignored Ririana’s, *not sure how i'm supposed to use this

expression, パァ*Pa～a!, expression which was shining, and with a, is this alright then? he glanced towards Kaori and them. The three people as well as Ririana returned a joyful smile at Hajime.

Somehow or another it's become really sweat now, he thought, even Yue and Shia besides him were smiling at him, [Ma～a, this isn't bad I guess], Hajime let out a bitter smile as he shrugged his shoulders.

[And where are you guys planning on heading Nagumo-kun? If you're aiming for Age of God's magic then you'll be going for the great labyrinths right? If you came from the West then……is it the Sea of Trees?]

[Ahh, that's our intent. I had plan to go via Fuyuren but, heading partly towards the south is bothersome so I think we'll just go as is towards the East]

After hearing what Hajime had planned, Ririana's expression was as if she had thought of something.

[Then, will you be passing through the Empire's territory?]

[It'll probably happen…..]

[If so then, would it be alright if I tagged along as well?]

[N? What for?]

[There are mountains of things to talk about with the Empire about the Kingdom being invaded. The messenger and ambassador have already left for the Empire but, it's best to talk about it at the earliest possible. With Nagumo-san's transportation artifact, getting to the Empire would be quick right? That's why, I was wondering if

I could board as well and have a direct talk over there]

Hajime was amazed at Ririana's bold plan and how she worked her way up towards it, if he thought about it, she was the princess who in order to get help, ran away from the Kingdom and traveled through a caravan. Thinking of it he was strangely convinced that it was natural that she would naturally think up of such an idea.

And, since it wasn't much trouble to just lower her down as they went along their path, his mind consented that it was alright. However, he didn't forget to give a warning.

[Dropping you off is fine but, we won't be entering the Empire? We'll never accompany you to a meeting with the Emperor?]

[Fufu, don't say such impudent things. Just dropping me off is more than enough]

Ririana unintentionally let out a wry smile after Hajime's cautious remark, then Kouki who was silenced by Hajime began to talk again.

[If that's so then, We'll also tag along. Riri can't be left alone with someone who thinks nothing of this world. We'll be the guards along the way. Besides, if Nagumo doesn't plan on doing anything then, I'll save this world! For that purpose, power is needed! The power of Age of God's magic! If we tag along with you guys, we'll be able to obtain Age of God's magic right!]

[No, I'll tell you their locations so don't come without permission. If you tag along it'll always be troublesome all the time]

What are you suddenly getting so fired up about, Hajime had an amazed expression. I guess the criticism about not relying on others wasn't understood. There, Aiko timidly points out Hajime's words from before.

[But, Nagumo-kun, you said that even if we challenged a great labyrinth now, we'd be killed]

[……No, that was, that other thing. Look, even I who was "incapable" managed to do something about it, so you guys should be fine. You can do it, you can do it. In short you need fighting spirit]

[Isn't that impossible?]

Hajime irresponsibly turned his eyes away from Aiko who completely remembered his remark.

As for Hajime, the dawn when they surpassed the limits of the world was something that he didn't mind allow his classmates to get a free pass into. But, helping them obtain Age of God's magic from the first step was something he wanted absolutely nothing to do with. There was no other reason but the loss of time.

[Nagumo-kun, could I ask you a favor. Just once is fine. Even with just 1 Age of Gods magic, it'll make a decisive difference in completing the other great labyrinths. Won't you let us follow along this once?]

[If you plan on leaching then the magic won't be obtainable? Its required through actions to be accepted by the labyrinth]

[Of course. Putting aside God's case for now, we're also the same in wanting to return home. We'll desperately challenge it with determined will. That's why, I ask of you. Being saved several times and only being able to say our thanks of repaying your kindness to you, but right now, we can't do anything but rely on you. Please lend us your power once more]

[Suzu's also asking, Nagumo-kun. I want to become stronger and have a talk with Eri once again. So I ask of you! This favor will definitely be repaid if you take along suzu and us]

Up until now Aiko had listen to their unreasonable words, only Shizuku earnestly wanted help to obtain the Age of Gods magic. Her expression was stiff and uneasy as she felt sorry that they had to rely on them while not being able to repay their kindness.

Suzu who had kept silent for a long time was also influenced by Shizuku and lowered her head. It appears that she had thought of various things about Eri. Her voice and expression carried desperation. Kouki's eyebrow jumped up a little in reaction to the spectacle he saw but, in the end he didn't say anything.

Hajime was hesitating. Normally, taking along Kouki and them to finish [Harutsuina Sea of Trees] was troublesome and unthinkable. He wanted to quickly refuse them and tell them to go to whichever they wanted out of [Orcus Great Labyrinth] or [Raisen Great Labyrinth].

However, this time, after his battle with Nointo his judgement was hesitating.

That was because, he thought of how to eliminate Nointo as well as the influential men who were seen manipulated back in the past at the [Merujine Underwater Ruins] who will likely be a nuisance, she

was a doll who was the embodiment of God's will and literally the hands and feet of God that moved around secretly behind the scenes.

Then, if "God's Apostle(Nointo)" was clearly created, sure enough, can we be certain that there's not more than one. It may be overly optimistic in thinking so.

Nointo had said. Hajime was an Irregular and God's wish was to have him die while suffering. If so then, sure enough it's logical to believe that they'll send in more existences like Nointo. Assuming so, for the sake of that time, it may be a good idea to give Kouki and them some power? Hajime thought.

Although it was quite evil to throw others at the enemies which were after him, [Ma~a, the Hero has his mind set on fighting God so there shouldn't be any problems right?], he thought lightly, in the end, he finally decided to accept their company and moved towards [Harutsuina Sea of Trees]. For the time being, he glanced at Yue and them for confirmation and it didn't appear that they had any particular objections.

Shizuku and them had a smile of relief which leaked out, Hajime was thinking about the 2 remaining great labyrinths that would come in the future.

Regardless of what's there, the ending of these travels were coming into view. No matter the existence which blocked their path, no matter the situation that they fall in, he'll beat them by all means and return home. Along with the "Importance" that he obtained in this world.

That oath renewed his desire and included his new bonds which piled up and became even stronger. While feeling the flame of determination growing bigger within his heart, Hajime quietly smiled.

Chatting Events of a Single Day -First-

This is not meant to be a perfect translation, I cannot read japanese characters and this was carefully edited based on translations I got from my Machine Translator. Therefore, there are bound to be errors here and there! At best, this could be considered as an unedited Final Draft towards an Official Translation

The Kingdom was unusually noisy as crowds of people were talking and chattering.

Usually you'd express it as "everyone is lively" but, if you looked at the facial expressions of the people in the Kingdom, you'd notice that the majority of those people had sorrowful and dark expressions. The invasion of the Kingdom was truly an unexpected event.

It's been 5 days since that day, the sense of loss and sorrow still lingering in the people's chests were bringing pain to their hearts. However, that still doesn't stop them from working on the reconstruction, that was surely "The strength of people".

On the main street of the Kingdom which was filled with sorrow and strength, a man with white hair and an eyepatch was buying something hotdog-like (because something that wasn't a sausage was inserted instead) and chewing on it as he walked towards the guild headquarters, it was Hajime. Only Yue and Shizuku was by his side. After going to the guild headquarters they were going to repair the great barriers, Shizuku volunteered to guide them to the artifact's location.

Shia and them were house sitting at the Royal Palace. It was judged that it would be better to not needlessly stimulate the

people with the appearances of another race walking through the Kingdom, so they volunteered to stay behind. Even if the Kingdom citizens know that the ones that attacked them were Majinzoku's, right now they'll likely indiscriminately target them because they "aren't humans".

The Kingdom were high believers of the church, to begin with, besides the Demi-human slaves, there were hardly any other race but humans. That's the judgement was proper. Right now if you're just judging by appearances then Kaori counted as human so she was currently helping Aiko and them who were busy helping Ririana, and Teio was sleeping in order to refill the magical power she's used up continuously for the past several days.

[The guild headquarters is……in the end, what do you plan on doing there?]

Shizuku asked Hajime as she was also similarly chewing on a cheese flavored hotdog.

[N? Ahh, I thought I'd just send a message reporting that the request was completed. Although it's something that should be done directly with words, it'll be far too troublesome to travel from Fuyuren towards the Sea of Trees. If I send a report through headquarters they'll properly deal with it]

[……By report…..are you talking about that child called Myu? Come to think of it, I don't see her appearance……]

After Shizuku was slightly disappointed and lowered her eyebrows, they explained that Myu was safely reunited with her mother. Was she done in by Myu's cuteness after only meeting momentarily? [I

wanted to hug her…….] Shizuku muttered. However, after hearing Yue's words, her eyes opened up widely.

[……It's fine. You'll meet again. Since Hajime will be taking her with us to Japan]

[…….....Hai? What does this mean Nagumo-kun?]

[What do you mean what does this mean, it's exactly as said. I've made a promise with Myu. I said I'd take her with me to my hometown]

[Eh…no…but…..Myu-chan is a Umininzoku*Sea person* right?]

Hajime shrugged his shoulders like there was nothing wrong while Shizuku was baffled.

[I understand what you're saying, but its not that much of a problem? There are lots of ways around it, and if there's none then just make one. Isn't it often said? something like, Whether or not it's possible, or whether you can do it or not]

[That's, ma~a, that's certainly true but….]

[To begin with, isn't it too late now? Shia's got usamimi's…..and Yue's not even albino but she has sharp canines and bright red eyes. If you look in the long-term, her appearance won't change either…..You probably didn't even think about it when I said that I was going to bring both of them back to Japan]

As Hajime made his points, Shizuku certainly had a wry smile now. Yue who was besides him had a faint smile on her face. She was quietly holding onto the hem of Hajime's clothes with her hand. Faintly, a sweet atmosphere began to drift. When Shizuku was hit

by the atmosphere, her temperature went up a bit, [Thanks for the meal], she said while fanning herself.

And while glancing over to the side at the two harmonious people, Shizuku was convinced that whatever happens Hajime will somehow find a way through it all even though she had no evidence, when she thought about the steep path which her best friend was traveling on, Shizuku began to become troubled and her eyebrows became an /\.

[.....Are you properly looking after Kaori?]

[N~? That's something you should ask the actual person herself. No matter what I say, I don't actually know how she feels? Ma~a, for me, just as promised, I don't intend to be cruel]

Shizuku suddenly became more worried after hearing those words. If you looked at Kaori's appearance then, somehow or another she understood what the answer was without hearing it, [You overprotective guy], she said as she looked towards Hajime.

Shizuku was feeling somewhat shameful and as Hajime showed signs of being amazed at the remarks, Yue suddenly dropped a bombshell.

[.....Because he's like that he was assaulted. Hajime, hang in there]

[O, oh]

[Eh? Please wait a moment. Was assaulted? Who did to who?]

[.....Kaori did to Hajime. It seems that during the confusion she

stole a kiss…..darn that Kaori]

[Ka, Kaori did…..no way….right, Kaori's already gone up the stairs towards adulthood….]

Before she knew it, her best friend had powered up in various meanings, Shizuku had distant eyes and her cheeks cramped up. As if she was left behind she began to feel lonely.

[…..Aiko is also dangerous. Be careful Hajime]

[…..There's no way that's true]

Hajime quickly averted his eyes away from Yue's sharp glance, he was one beat too slow in denying that possibility. Shizuku who regained herself as the 2 people talked, that's right! with a sharp glance just like Yue, she thoroughly questioned Hajime.

[Somehow, you're talking as if you've realised it? And? Nagumo-kun, what have you done to Ai-chan?]

[Oi, kora. Why are you already assuming that I've done something]

[Ever since the day that Ai-chan came back to the Kingdom she's been acting funny. ……Whenever she spoke of you she blushed. …….I highly doubt that it was because you repelled that large army. Something definitely happened while still at the town of Ulu? Sa~a, truthfully spill it out! It's an important matter of whether or not Kaori's rivals will be increasing!]

[No, like I said, I…..]

Shizuku who had heated-up, [do～u, do～u], and trying to suppress it, she began to try and get idea's out of Hajime. Then there, Yue while expressionless, exposed it all.

[.....They kissed. Dense guy]

[! Nagumo-kun! People like you! The other party is a Sensei!]

[Wait, calm down. I'll explain it so, don't grab my neck, don't shake me!]

With a, This high-grade flag architect!, expression, Shizuku began to shake Hajime, and then Hajime's story of the lifesaving act that was performed at Ulu was told. Due to the poison, Aiko couldn't drink the medicine on her own, because the situation called for urgency, he forcefully made her drink it.

Since then it further increased when Shimizu was shot and she was rescued from the isolation tower at the head temple, with Yue adding onto it, Shizuku became convinced. Ahh, don't….fall Ai-chan.

[Ma～a, I understand that it wasn't completely intended to happen but…..Nagumo-kun, you look as if you've somehow figured out Ai-chan's feelings. Since when have you found out?]

[.....Since the time when I was taking care of Sensei after she blew up the head temple and killed Ishtar and his group. …….Because she was looking at me with strangely feverish eyes, It couldn't be though～ is what I had thought but…..As expected, it was like that?]

[.....It's like that]

[It's like that right]

Towards Shizuku and Yue's confirmation without hesitation, the emergency which was pushed into the corner of his mind came up again as Hajime looked up towards the sky. What are you going to do? is what the glances from both sides said to him, Hajime started thinking of ideas as he groaned out, [U~n]……

[Un, let's neglect it]

is what he concluded with.

[…..Ma~a, I don't think Aiko-chan will be taking on the offensive. Rather than dealing with it poorly, just leaving it as is might be better…..]

[Ah? ……Ahh, it's just like you said. That person's a teacher so she has her commitments to keep. Since I'm a student, pretending that I haven't noticed it is the best course of action]

Actually, it was simply too troublesome to deal with, so as Hajime said out the plausible reasons he was averting his eyes somewhat and that fact was seen through by Shizuku who was staring at Hajime.

Shizuku's glance showed that she was through with the topic and ate all that was left of the hotdog, then Hajime and them finally reached the adventurers guild headquarters in the Kingdom. The building had a feeling like it wasn't inferior in history or scale when compared with Fuyuren's branch. When the entrance opened

up, there were a lot of adventurers going in and out busily. The amount of requests in the Kingdom likely shot up after the invasion after all.

Hajime and them entered the guild and walked towards the ten rows of large counters. Though it was jammed packed with adventurers, as expected, the receptionists of the headquarters showed splendid skills in their procedures and the lines continued progressing at a fierce rate. In addition, the receptionists were all beautiful women. Right, they were incredible beauties. There was also a cute child as well. An incredibly cute child. *I assume by child they're talking about a woman and not a kid, however in text it was child so i'll leave it as such*

However, Hajime was not one to fall for such honeytraps. After all, Hajime's lover was someone who wouldn't lose out in cuteness nor beauty, she was the perfect beautiful woman. Even now, she was the happy and cute woman holding onto Hajime's hand. There was no chance that he'd ever be fascinated by other women.

That's why, Hajime was thinking that he'd want to be given a break from the traps while breaking through happily and gayly. Because he really won't be fascinated by any other woman other than Yue after all.

After having enough of Shizuku's amazed expression while beside them, Hajime finally reached the receptionist. As he took out his status plate he also took out to submit the documents proving that Myu was safely returned to Erisen.

[Though I've come to report a completed request, is it possible for the head the Iruwa branch to report it to the Fuyuren branch from

headquarters?]

[Hai? ….A nominated quest……right? I'm sorry, please wait for a moment……]

The receptionist tilted her neck a little in puzzlement from Hajime's words. It was a proper reaction because a nominated quest from a head of a branch would never be given out to just any adventurer. Currently, the adventurers who were doing their procedures next to Hajime were looking at him in surprise.

When the receptionist received Hajime's status plate and looked at the contents, her clarified expression was destroyed and became just like the adventurers who were surprised. And after comparing the status plate and Hajime's face numerous times, she stood up in a panic.

[Are you without a doubt, Na, Nagumo Hajime-sama?]

[? Ahh, it's exactly as written on the status plate]

[I'm deeply sorry but, would you please come into the reception room? On the occasion that Nagumo-sama visited the guild, we've been informed to bring him inside……I'll immediately call the guild master]

[Ha? No, I just want to request that the completed report gets sent to the head of the Iruwa branch. Besides, I've got plans to go and repair the great barrier after this. Please pardon me from the trouble]

[Eh, eh~, that'll put me in a troubling position…..I'll immediately, immediately, call the guild master to come so, please wait for a moment!]

With that the receptionist disappeared into the interior while leaving behind all of Hajime's paperwork and status plate with a speed which seemed that it could generate enough force to make a ~Pew~ sound. Hajime became disappointed. Yue and Shizuku patted Hajime's shoulder as if saying, ma~a, ma~a.

Although Hajime was told to wait for a while, he wondered if this was more troublesome and if he should just report directly to the Iruwa branch? as he thought this, an old man with a beard appeared with the receptionist from a while ago. When Hajime saw the old man he was convinced. He was absolutely the kind of old man who while tossing away his clothes to show his muscles, turn into a macho-oldman while raising out a shout, [Fun'nu~ua!].

That old man with the weird atmosphere was definitely the guild master and from the moment he appeared the guild suddenly rapidly became noisier. When the guild master called out to Hajime, the commotion spread out to the entire guild.

It appears that the guild master's name was Barusu Raputa. It was a name which somehow sounded like it'll being a person into ruins. Somehow it wasn't as bothersome as Hajime had first expected, his glance seemed to indicate that he wanted to talk with Hajime about the report to Iruwa.

No matter which town he travels to and whatever incidents occurred, he had a feeling in his chest that everything would turn out alright but, that was expecting too much.

[Barusu-dono, won't you introduce them to me? If it's someone who's being eyed by the guild master then, by all means, I'd like to become an acquaintance? Especially because as a gentlemen, it

would not do to not greet those lovely women?]

The person who said such affectionate lines while coming closer besides Hajime and them was a bond pretty boy. 4 beautiful women were following behind him. When the surrounding adventurers saw him they began to whisper between themselves. The reason was because he was a “Gold” rank adventurer named Abel. It seems that his second name was “Flash Blade”.

With that, Barusu announced that Hajime and Abel were both “Gold” rankers. The surrounding noise became incredible in an instant which caused Hajime to have a purely troublesome expression. Hajime was about to take Yue and Shizuku and immediately leave the guild but, Abel definitely had an interest in Shizuku and Yue so he had no intentions of allowing them to leave so easily.

Or rather, does no one notice that Shizuku was in the Hero’s party? Hajime thought with a questionable face. While disregarding Hajime’s current state, Able called out to Hajime with a refreshed face and laughingly.

[Fu～n, you’re “Gold” huh～. You seem quite young though……just what kind of hand did you play? There’s no way it was a proper method right? Ahh, since it wasn’t a proper method you can’t say it out here huh……sorry for not being considerate enough?]

*It’s imagery, he’s human lol*Abel was spitting out poison while smiling. At this point, Hajime had completely discarded the thought of fighting with Abel. It was because he judged that he wasn’t worthy enough to be an opponent. Yue and Shizuku also realised what Hajime was thinking and also tried to quickly leave

the guild.

[Ma～a, wait a bit. Just because I'm a real "Gold" doesn't mean you have to run away. It's not like I'll eat you? Ma～a, since you might not be able to stay around, leaving is fine but, how about I go out for a meal with those girls? I'll show them what a real "Gold" is?]

So Abel says as he blocks them off. His eyes were convinced that if he invited the women they would absolutely not refuse. However, considering what Abels words sounded like in front of the 3 cheats……it sounded absolutely ludicrous. Since Barusu knew of Hajime and their true identities, his face was trembling and shaking.

[Oi, Yaegashi. Taking care of these unfortunate pretty boys is what you're in charge of right? I'll leave it to you, the specialist, this is just like a degraded version of Amanogawa]

[Who's the specialist of what. To begin with, what are you saying about another person's childhood friend. Kouki isn't …….this disappointing? …..Maybe, surely…..he's not that pitiful and regrettable]

[……Shizuku, you say some unexpected things sometimes. But I intensely agree]

The 3 people were having an extremely natural conversation while being through with Abel. He's probably never received bad treatment ever since he obtained "Gold". The other women were also glaring scowly at Yue and them.

As expected it was becoming a riot so Hajime was thinking about

starting a countdown before blowing away all members that were laughing, including the guild master……while Hajime was having such dangerous thoughts, an unexpectedly deep voice spoke out like a young girl called out to Hajime and them.

[Ara～a～n, Isn't it Hajime-san and Yue-oneesama over there?]

Hajime felt chills from the mysterious voice and immediately took a defensive stance with Donner pulled out. And the one who appeared when Hajime and them turned around was……

[Wh, what is this monster!?]

[Who～is, who could ever confuse San-chi's face for a monster!?]
This line is definitely wrong it was a mess, SAN値直葬間違いなしの名状し難い直視するのも忌避すべき化け物ですってぇ

Abel shouted out instinctively towards the mass of muscle with wide open eyes! It had thick muscle armor throughout its entire body and face just like what you'd see in comics and was around 2 meters in height. Yet it had it's red hair tied up to make twintails with a cute ribbon and what they were wearing was a so-called Yukata dress. There were lots of frills attached onto it. They were fluttering around a lot. The thick legs were wonderfully exposed.

For a moment, Hajime had thought that it was the monster, Christabel, from Brook town but, it appears to have been a different person. Unless that guy had a shape shifting ability…..

[Hi～i, st, stay away! Who do you think I am! I'm the "Gold"

ranked “Flash Blade” Abel! If you come any closer than this, I’ll cut you down here!]

[Ma~a, that’s terrible! To be called a monster on our first meeting and killed….you’re the same “Gold” as manager but you’re treating me quite differently~*<- you’ll understand later*. But…..you’re face is to my preference♡]

Hajime and them stiffened up from being called out by the man-woman and reminded of Christabel, meanwhile Abel had somehow been cornered. No, he? She? was just there but, San-chi was seen as an enemy and about to be cut down by Abel.

The man looked towards Abel with an amazed expression as he screamed out instinctively? She? If so then, she seems to prefer Abel’s looks and impatiently approached. With her eyes shining like a beast and while licking her lips.

[I said don’t come over here! You monster!]

Abel who was unable to withstand the fear finally pulled out his sword. It was a “Gold” ranked adventurer’s attack. Everyone had thought that it would take the life of the man-woman but, the reality was well beyond their expectations.

The man-woman who cut the distance in an instant towards Abel while leaving an afterimage held onto Abel’s sword with one hand and grabbed him as is. In other words, it was a bearhug.

Abel’s body could be heard creaking out and was desperately trying

to escape. However, because the restraint was formed by muscles, he wasn't able to escape, while he was struggling desperately, Abel's tragic time had begun.

[Nufufu, I'll thoroughly punish the bad child♡]

[Stop it! Don--mmu~guu!?]

Abel began to break out into convulsions, after a while, the sound of a sword clanging onto the ground was heard. That sight was almost like a flower's bud being cut off.

The women who were serving Abel all turned pale faced in an instant and ran out of the guild at full speed. Afterwards, the guild as wrapped in silence, Abel was finally released and fell to the ground as if broken. No matter how you looked at it, the victim was the ruffian.

However, what was there was definitely a "Gold" ranked adventurer. He still retained some consciousness as he glared at the man-woman. ……But, he immediately looked away from the man-woman and glanced over towards Hajime.

[O, oi, you! You're the same "Gold" right! Then help me! Besides, although you may have obtained it through unjust means, I'll put in a good word for you! You're role is to help me, the "Flash Blade"! It'll be an Honor! Look, quickly do something about this monster! You slowpoke!]

Although Hajime didn't understand why he was asking for help

while verbally abusing him but, his glance was past amazement and turned into pity and regret for Abel. Incidentally, if this really is “Gold”, then this world’s adventurers are doomed? Barusu thought. Barusu shook his neck as if he was denying something. There may have been various problems with Abel being “Gold”.

And while Abel was unleashing out all kinds of unbearable insults, the one who came forwards was not the man-woman, but Yue. There, Abel got the wrong idea.

[Ahh, you’re willing to help me? Then, tonight I’ll make time just for yo-……]

[……Don’t open your mouth]

Hajime and Shizuku understood that Yue’s voice carried anger in it. It seems she’s a bit ticked off that he was verbally abusing Hajime. While interrupting Abel’s words, a black swirling orb appeared in Yue’s right palm.

[……Be born once again then come back “Beep” rascal]

[Eh～? Wai-!? Stop, ah, ah, aaah---------!!!]

On this day, another person from this world, a man has perished and the gave out their first cries as a man-woman.

With a satisfied expression, Yue who crushed the symbol of a man, returned to Hajime’s side. If you looked at the surroundings, all male adventurers covered their crotches with both hands while

slouching over and trembling. Someone within them had tears in their eyes as well. It appears that just seeing it was enough to damage them.

Then, at that time, whispers began to be heard in the guild that was wrapped in silence.

[O, oi, a blond girl with red eyes and a white haired boy with an eyepatch…..]

[Eh? It, it can't be, the "Crotch Smasher"!]

[Seriously…..then those two are "Sma-love"…..]* <- original text, Or Smash Lovers, whichever floats ur boat*

[Eh? What's that, those two horrifying names]

[You don't know? They're the adventurers who appeared like a comet several months ago. "A blond girl with red eyes like a rose. Don't be misled by those good looks, if you get pulled in what awaits you is a new world. She has the appearance of a goddess but she's also the son killing demon king""By her side is the white haired boy with an eyepatch. The incarnation of unreasonableness. Words never get through to him. Do not make eye contact. Do not speak out to him. Do not get into his sights. If you still want to live that is", that's what the minstrel who came from Brook said. In fact, even in Fuyuren and Hourado, theres been quite a lot of men's whose son were murdered to the state of being unable to recover by an unknown group?]*Son here meaning genitals*

[What's with that, how scary]

It appears that Hajime and Yue's name circulated even to the Kingdom due to minstrels. The surrounding adventurers looked at Hajime and them in terror while shivering, if we make eye contact, we'll get done in! they thought as they gradually distanced

themselves while covering their crotch.

[You guys…..what exactly were you guys doing]

Shizuku looked at Hajime and Yue with an amazed glance. Yue looked indifferent but, Hajime's cheeks were cramping up grandly as the rumors of the 2 names spread. Then, the man-woman from a while ago called out to them.

[It's been a while? I'm happy that you two haven't changed, wan]
<- a dog's barking noise

[…..No, who are you. Are you Christabel's acquaintance?]

Hajime asked while being openly on guard towards the man-woman who winked at them. He had a slight trauma of the time when he was attacked by Christabel while leaving Brook Town. Once again, Shizuku who also witnessed the strange scene, thought, where did the usual everyday social conversations go, her cheeks were unintentionally cramping up, as she casually withdrew behind Hajime to make him a shield.

[Ara, how thoughtless of me…..you wouldn't know from my appearance nen? I once confessed to Yue-oneesama and I literally suffered an honorable death as a man but……have you remembered?]

[……Ah. Really?]

It appears that Yue had an idea as she looked up at the man-

woman with a shocked expression. The man-woman laughed happily as Yue managed to remember.

According to his self introduction, he confessed to Yue at Brook Town but was immediately shot down, the people who she mainly performed a crotch smash on were mainly adventurers, and as a man-woman he/she studied under Christabel. By the way, it seems that his/her name was Mariabel (Named by Christabel).

[At that time, I was truly foolish, wan. I'm sorry ne? Yue-oneesama….]

[…..N, you've become splendid. A new life should be enjoyed]

[Ufufu, I thought that Oneesama would say that, wan. Speaking of which, recently, there have been more and more boys hoping to become Christabel's apprentices. If I remember right, it was a former "Black" rank adventurer and some former mercenaries based in the hidden organization in Horuado……with that, the manager has to expand her shop nen. Today is the preliminary inspection]

Hajime's spine began to tingle and his expression distorted and trembled in fear. It appears that because of Hajime and them, there were large quantities of man-woman in this world and they were multiplying.

However, Hajime hadn't noticed that Mariabel was originally an average height and built man. The rapid growth within these few months was……due to Christabel's training methods, by itself, it seems to be at a monstrous level.

Furthermore, from what Mariabel spilled out a while ago, Christabel was originally a “Gold” rank adventurer. Naturally her disciples would become extremely competent in combat. It was clear from the fight that Mariabel had with Abel a while ago.

A huge unparalleled army of man-woman…..it’s a nightmare.

As Hajime watched Yue and Mariabel exchange conversations in a friendly manner, he renewed his determination to escape from this world as soon as possible.

Shizuku said with an amazed voice, [You reap what you sow….], as she stood behind him. Somehow or another, Hajime who was angry, pushed Shizuku off onto Mariabel.

After this, the pleased Mariabel gave Shizuku a grand hug to the point of causing her face to turn pale, after she was separated from Mariabel, she went and quarreled grandly with Hajime, at that time, the rumor ridiculing Shizuku’s relationship started spreading but……it’ll be omitted here.

Chating Events of a Single Day -Second-

This is not meant to be a perfect translation, I cannot read japanese characters and this was carefully edited based on translations I got from my Machine Translator. Therefore, there are bound to be errors here and there! At best, this could be considered as an unedited Final Draft towards an Official Translation

At the adventurers guild Hajime had learned of a separate kind of world threat, however, he tried to ignore it as much as possible as he went to repair the great barrier.

The place where Shizuku guided them to was being guarded by a considerable amount of soldiers, the guards turned a dangerous look towards Hajime as he approached. However, they're eyes softened up immediately when they noticed that Shizuku was by his side.

Thanks to Shizuku's face pass, they were easily allowed in and found a space which was made out of white marble-like stone, at the center was a magic formation with a cylindrical artifact enshrined on top of it. The artifact would normally be around 2 meters in length but, right now it was broken from the middle and it's remains were scattered around.

Around it's surrounding was a few men worrying till wits end as they groaned, [un,un]. They were most likely the craftsmen who were trying to repair the great barrier.

[Oya? If it isn't Shizuku-dono. ……What brings you here?]

A man who was around his 60s with a fully grown mustache and carried an obvious craftsman aura called out to Shizuku as soon as he noticed. It appears to have been one of Shizuku's acquaintances.

[Hello, Worupen-san. I'm just a guide. I've brought along a Synergist who may be able to repair the great barrier]

[What was that? Is it by chance that boy there?]

The man who Shizuku called Worupen turned his glance over to Hajime and was clearly suspicious but did not voice it to Shizuku.

Truthfully, Worupen was under the Hairhi Kingdom's direct control as the head synergist. The great barrier artifact was naturally an Age of Gods artifact, in the present age, attempting to repair it was extremely difficult even for the head synergist of the royal palace. So even if he was suddenly told that a boy who wasn't even 20 yet was able to fix it, it would be natural that he wouldn't be able to believe it so easily.

However, Hajime wasn't concerned with those kinds of glances and passed between Worupen and the other craftsmen towards the artifact and place his hand onto the ruins. What he activated was "Mineral Appraisal".

[He~e, I see…..it should be strong if it's like this]

[Fu~n, you're just a kid so what could you possibly know about it]

As Hajime nodded as he understood how the great barrier was able

to protect the Kingdom for hundreds of years from foreign enemies, Worupen grunted out from his nose in a bad mood.

However, Hajime was indifferent towards Worupen's attitude and proceeded to begin "Transmuting". Red sparks began to spread out around Hajime and one after another he began to fuse the wreckage with one hand back into their original places.

Towards that transmuting speed and accuracy, not only Worupen but also his subordinates weren't able to peel their eyes away. Shizuku who was also seeing Hajime's all-out "Transmuting" for the first time, seemed to also have been fascinated by the red sparks which was dancing around in the white space as she mutters, [How beautiful…..].

Hajime who finished repairing the Age of Gods artifact in only a matter of several tens of seconds suddenly began pouring in magical power into it to activate the great barrier.

The cylindrical artifact shot out light from its top which climbed up towards the sky. Immediately afterwards, a soldier who was guarding outside rushed into the room and reported that the 3rd barrier had revived.

[…….How could this be……an artifact from the Age of Gods was so easily……]

Shizuku told the stunned Worupen with a wry smile that Hajime came from the same world as she did. [No wonder….] Worupen and them said with a convinced face.

Incidentally, when she told them that the black katana which fired them all up before was made by Hajime, they're eyes suddenly sparkled and shined like beasts. Hajime disregarded them and continued to quickly walk towards the next artifacts location.

However, Worupen and them with their massive craftsmen spirits, knew that they couldn't just easily let go of a synergists who was above them.

[Please wait a moment-----!! An apprentice! By all means, please take us in as your apprentices----!!]

[Uo! Wha, what's with you guys suddenly. Or rather, don't cling onto my feet! You're creeping me out!]

Worupen was appealing to become Hajime's apprentice as he clung onto his feet. In addition, Worupen's subordinates begin to one by one cling onto Hajime in order to not let him escape. While genuinely being disgusted from the bottom of his heart that he was in such close contact with such hairy men, Hajime tried to shake them off of his leg but they had firmly gripped on so it was hard to get them off.

Since there was no helping it, he activated "Thunder Clad" which caused everyone to go, [Abababababa], and he broke free. Even still, the craftsmen crawled and reached out with their hands, as expected even Hajime couldn't ignore them and said out a clear reason to decline them.

[Look here, I'll be immediately leaving this place and I have no

plans to return to the Kingdom either. Having apprentices is also very troublesome as well, first of all, even if you became my apprentices I wouldn't have anything to teach you guys]

[But, you easily repaired the artifact and even made Shizuku-dono's black katana as well. We have absolutely no idea how to create something like that at all. If you're willing to teach us then……]

[No, it wasn't just "Transmuting Magic" it was also "Creation Magic", a magic which you guys aren't capable of is required]

[That can't be…..]

Worupen and them exhaustively dropped their shoulders towards Hajime's words. Truthfully, the great barrier artifact was also created with Space magic through Creation magic, the barrier of the Kingdom was a special type which intercepted space.

A normal synergist wouldn't be able to repair it. Of course, since space magic was ingrained into the ores, if you steadily repaired it, it's likely that you'd be able to repair it to some degree but not until perfection.

Disregarding Worupen and them who hung their heads, when Hajime tried to once again go towards the location of the other artifact, Worupen and their eyes sharpened up again.

[Still, it doesn't change the fact that you have excellent transmuting skills! By all means, take us in as apprentices~!!]

[How persistent!]

Such fearsome craftsmen spirit. It wouldn't be good if he didn't compromise. In the end, while Hajime was repairing all of the artifacts, Worupen and them who were supposed to be the Kingdom's synergists were sticking onto him and crying like babies.

Furthermore was it because they heard of the rumors? Those who gathered weren't just the synergists at the scene, eventually Hajime was being crowded as they tried to learn his techniques. Hajime who was close to wits end was beginning to fling the craftsmen far away into the distance but, they got up like zombies as they tried to learn of the secrets to his "Transmuting" and crowded around him once again.

As expected of the craftsmen's and their desires to reconstruct the Kingdom, Hajime was planning to escape but…..it appears that they were communicating through the craftsmens network in the Kingdom, wherever he went they appeared! and asked limitless questions. It appears that until they learn of everything, they have no plans to stop clinging or leaving, as expected even Hajime was shrinking back from it.

While being bombarded with questions, Hajime finally planned to seriously escape and created the game of tag that all craftsmen in the Kingdom participated in.

[Damn, what's happening here. Even though I'm using "Hide Presence"]

[Hahaha～, those kinds of things are useless against our "Craftsmen intuition"]

[We can clearly feel you! Nagumo-dono's passionate pathosssssss!!]*<- basically his feelings*

[Ha~a, Ha~a, the presence of techniques! We can hear the gasping voice of the amazing techniquesssssss!!]

The craftsmen? were equipped with a different kind of institution which surpassed Hajime's. While having a cramped cheek of not wanting to be touched, he seriously thought over if he should pull out Donner and schlag or not.

In the end, the escaping and pursuing drama caused great confusion because the craftsmen's had disappeared from their reconstruction sites, when it finally reached Ririana's ears, the royal family intervened and restored control in the situation.

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[Don't say such ridiculous things. …….The case with the black katana was already an uproar but, that's exactly why I knew that it was impossible to stop them who had flames within them……]

[Hajime, thanks for the good work]

Shizuku made an excuse while looking away and Yue drank tea while patting Hajime on the head. When Hajime hugged Yue tightly, as is, he carried her like a princess and sat down on the opposite seat of Shizuku.

[…..What is it I wonder, these smoldering irritated feelings. Even though Yue took the same actions as me…..]

[Ha? There's no reason Yue and Yaegashi are on the same level is there? If you're the other party then I'll get angry, if it's Yue then its no problem]

[Un, Yue is your lover after all, I get what you're saying but…..right now I want to hit you so badly]

Towards the obvious difference in treatment, even though she understood that she'd naturally get done in, a blue vein appeared as she became angry. It was the same concept of becoming angry at lovers who were flirting in front of her even if she knew they were lovers.

Yue who was on his knee, began to say, [A~n], to Hajime with the snacks that came along with the tea, [I'm in your way huh? I'm a bothersome insect huh?], with twitching cheeks Shizuku was thinking about escaping to where Kaori was but, suddenly, the door to their room was flung opened with a ~Ban!~ sound without being knocked on.

What is it? what was reflected in Hajime and their sights was a 10 year-old blond haired blue eyed pretty boy and he glared at Hajime while ~Ki'ing!~. Moreover, did he not like that Yue was sitting on Hajime's lap? After seeing Yue for a moment his eyes became further enraged which seemed to contain 2 times the anger from before.

[Was it you! The scum who adjusted Kaori! M, moreover, even though there's Kaori, those, those kinds of things….I won't forgive it, I'll definitely never forgive you!]

The person appearing and saying such things was the prince of this country, Randell S.B. Hairhi. Randell clenched his fist and ran towards Hajime while letting out a courageous shout, [U~oooooo!]. His mind was filled with giving Hajime a beating.

Although Hajime didn't understand what was going on, for the time being he decided to pick up a sugar cube that was prepared for tea on the table and flicked it in opposition. The sugar cube which flew out at impossible speeds, accurately hit Randell in the forehead, [Higu~u!], he let out a strange scream as his head was flung back onto the floor.

The pain of his forehead and the back of his head caused him to roll around with his hands covering his head. After writhing in pain for a while, he got back up and ~Ki!'ed~ at Hajime as he glared and rushed in again.

Therefore, Hajime let loose the second shot. ~Bachikon!~ sounded out as Randell's head was flung backwards. The sugar cube was crushed and scattered into the air as if dancing and Randell was forcefully performing a backflip due to the sheer power and fell

onto the ground once again.

[Your, your highness~! You~, how dare you do that to his highness~!]

[We'll beat and cut you!]

[Protect his highness!]

From the door that Randell flung open, some old men who were guard-like came running in and charged at Hajime.

Bachikon! Bachikon! Bachikon!

Of course in one rotation, the sugar cubes were accurately fired into all members foreheads, in another sense they were all artistically kneeling together.

However, Randell and the old men were quite tenacious, they glared at Hajime as they tried to stand back up. While thinking that they had some nice guts, Hajime grabbed the whole bottle filled with cubes and fired them all after taking them out.

Chuchuchuchuchuchuchuin!

An impossible sound ranged out and sugar cubes were flicked out like a machine gun from Hajime's hand, Randell and them were writhing on the ground like a bad marionette performance.

Although damage was kept to a minimum because they were just sugar cubes, it doesn't change the fact that it still hurt. Shizuku who became absentminded with her jaw dropped down, finally regained her composure and restrained Hajime, the room had already been filled with sobs of sorrow.

After Hajime stopped firing sugar cubes because he ran out, he stared at Randell who had his legs arranged as if he was a woman who was assaulted by a thug and had his face buried into the floor while crying in sorrow. It appears that his heart broke after taking on Hajime's relentless attacks.

The surrounding old men rushed up towards him and were saying, [Your highness~! The wounds are shallow!], in order to comfort him.

Then, Ririana appeared at that timing.

Shizuku was scolding Hajime that he went overboard, Yue who was on top of Hajime's lap was calmly eating and chewing on the teacakes, Hajime who was receiving a warning from Shizuku was indifferently drinking his tea, and Randell who broke down into tears and the old men who were trying to cheer him up as he cried.

When Ririana saw them she understood the situation and covered her eyes with one hand as she looked up towards the sky.

[It appears that I was too late…..]

[*Princess*Hime-san huh? I don't know what it's about, but your blood brother seems to be emotionally unstable? Won't you quickly reclaim him?]

Ririana's eyes seemed to want to say, [It's probably your fault right!], but, certainly it was also because Randell suddenly went out of control under false charges, she gave a deep sigh and helped Randell get up.

The cause why Randell charged at Hajime was obviously due to Kaori.

The completely changed Kaori (body) caused Randell to be surprised and he asked for the reason why she's become like that. From the results, it appears that he understood that it was because of "Hajime-kun", furthermore, due to Kaori's expression while talking about Hajime being exactly like a maiden in love, he finally realised who his true enemy was.

And, a guy who tossed away Kaori's original body can't possibly be a good guy! once he convinced himself he began to rush in and witnessed Hajime embracing another woman while Kaori was yearning for him in her heart which caused him to hit his boiling point in anger.

Randell had intended to challenge and rescue the trapped princess from the demon lord Hajime but…..the results were as shown presently.

Far from giving a beating, he wasn't even able to get close and

treated as a minor hindrance, it was pathetic and mortifying so tears finally started flowing out.

While being picked up into Ririana's arms, Randell suddenly cried out, [Aneue～*Older sister*] and clung onto her. Looking at his state, as expected even for Hajime, did I overdo it? he thought as he scratched his cheek. Shizuku was piercing him with an amazed glance at his childishness.

But, Randells misfortunes have not yet ended. Immediately after he buried his face into Ririana's chest, Kaori entered the room.

[Ah, his highness Randell, and Riri as well……wait, what's wrong your highness!? Your crying so much!]

[Ka, Kaori!? No, this, this is, it's not like I wanted to be comforted by my sister…..]

Randell quickly separated from Ririana and desperately made excuses. In front of the woman who he liked, he couldn't bear to say that he was a boy who wanted to be comforted and held by his older sister.

However, Kaori understood the rough situation from Shizuku and Ririana's expression and from Randell's crying and Hajime's attitude, and she finally dropped a bomb after a long time.

[Geez….it's Hajime-kun right? Who made his highness cry. It's not good to bully a younger child]

[No, it's because he suddenly tried to beat me, I just patted him a little…..]

He was actually being serious, but not even being a threat to Hajime, Randell fell into shock. However, the most damaging part was that it was judged that he was naturally being bullied. Suppressing his chest he groaned out, [Gu].

[Patting him…..did you properly “hold back”? His highness is still a “child” after all?]

After having been treated like a child from the woman who he liked, Randell who was humiliated by the assumption, [Ha～u!], further suppressed his chest.

[Ahh, I only flicked some sugar cubes? There’s probably hardly any damage. As expected even I wouldn’t go around shooting a child]

[But he was “holding onto” Riri wasn’t he……moreover his forehead is reddening. Even though he had such a “cute” face….his highness is a bit “quick to assume” and “tends to run out of control” but, at the bottom of it all he’s a “good child” so if possible I’d like it if you could “properly choose your opponents”.....]

She was completely aware that he was comforting himself with Riri, while being evaluated as cute as a man, having his bad points pointed out that his older sister continually noted, and furthermore being treated as a child. Randell’s knees suddenly gave out and he fell onto the ground on all fours.

[Ara～ra], Riri had a troubled smile but, Shizuku and the old men, [Please stop already, his highnesses life points are already at 0～!],

seemed to be raising out bitter voices within themselves.

However, Kaori didn't let up. She worried about Randell who suddenly fell and called out anxiously.

[Your highness, are you alright? As expected the spot where you were hit was too much….]

[……No, I'm not injured. Rather than that…..Kaori…….what does Kaori think about me?]

Randell who was covered in wounds, decisively heard Kaori's feelings

[For his highness? Let's see….sometimes I become envious of Riri. I also~ want a naughty younger brother like his highness]

[Gufu~...young, younger brother…..]

The bomb that was dropped with a smile gave additional damage to Randell. Shizuku and the old men were thinking, why would you purposely pour salt onto the wound like that! with a face that seemed to want to cry, it seemed that Randell's eyes had no more strength to withstand it.

However, even if he's small Randell is a man, he can't afford to stop here. Over the past few days, he cried a lot from the news of his fathers death, was helped up by his mother and older sister, and had just sworn in front of the grave to be strong. Now that the king of this country was gone he needed to lead it, he can't afford to be

stopped by this level of pain!

[Then…..is that kind of guy good? What's so good about that guy!]

Rendell stared and ~Ki'ed!~ at Hajime, it was as if he was appealing and implying, [Open your eyes Kaori! You should already know who's better!].

Hajime firmly held onto Yue from behind as Randell stared at him. From Randell's view, he was likely the worst person a woman could fall for.

However, Kaori's reply was obvious…..

[Eh? wh, what's with that your highness, suddenly….mo~u, it's embarrassing. But…..fufu, let's see. That person is the person I love. If you asked me what about him I liked then, everything, I guess…..fufu]

And, that gave the final blow to Randell.

Once again Randell looked down and trembled greatly while still on all fours. Although Kaori was worried and about to rubbed his back with her hand and call out to him, Randell suddenly got up and rejected Kaori's hand as he bolted towards the entrance.

And, he turned around once he reached the door,

[I hate the likes of youuuuu!!!]

He cried out loud and ran off. As he left, the shining thing at the corner of his eyes probably wasn't their imaginations. From a distance, [Ua～aaaaaan!!], it was not understood if it was a cry or a courageous shout but it was clearly heard. After Randell's sudden escape, the dumbfounded old men, [Your highness～!], they shouted as they left the room to chase after Randell.

[……That's youth for you]

[Hi～i, more like personal affairs…..you've made him cry]

[No, ma～a, that's right but…..the one who dealt the finishing blow was Kaori right?]

[Ku, I can't refute that…..]

Hajime muttered out as Randell's first love dispersed like the petals of cherry blossoms and Shizuku added in a tsukkomi. Kaori was wondering what was going on and about to run after Randell but Ririana stopped her.

Ririana knew that sooner or later Randell's first love would come to an end, she had intended to comfort her younger brother by sleeping together with him for tonight. Randell was someone who will soon become the King of this country. He should be able to shrug off one or two unrequited loves.

When Ririana firmly closed the door that was left open, she walked

towards Hajime and them along with Kaori. It appears that, rather than chasing after Randell, it seemed like she had something to talk about with Hajime and them. Ririana took the seat next to Shizuku.

Kaori was…..locking arms in “hand to hand” against Yue while trying to sit on Hajime’s opposite knee which caused them to look like they were pro wrestling.

If it were her original body then, Kaori wouldn’t be able to stand up against Yue because she was able to strengthen her body through direct magic manipulation while Kaori was a support type, however, because of the apostle’s body she’s well able to compete now….more like she seems to be the one who was pushing.

[Kaori….You’ve become so strong….]

[No, Shizuku. Stop being impressed and stop them]

Ririana tsukkomied Shizuku who had a slightly lonely expression while making her remark. Since there was some shock when Kaori died once, Shizuku was slightly becoming a regrettable person when regarding Kaori. There’s no way they could have the classes number 1 person with the most common sense turn into a regrettable character so, Hajime gave Kaori a strong flick to the forehead which forced her to sit on the seat besides them.

[U～u, it’s unfair that it’s only Yue…..]

[……Fufu, I won’t give up Hajime’s knee]

[Ano～, I’d like to begin the talk soon but…..]

Ririana called out coyly. However no one paid any attention to her.

[Hajime-kun…..]

[Don't look at me with those eyes, Kaori. You're sitting next to me, isn't it fine?]

[…..I guess it can't be helped then. I'll give you my hand]

[Eh? Really? Then, I want you to caress my cheeks just like how you do it for Yue. ……Or is it no good?]

[If it's just that much then I don't mind]

[Ehehe, thanks, Hajime-kun]

[I'll wait then. Waiting should be fine right? Yes, I'll wait no matter how long…..~gusu~]

Ririana who completely missed her timing to talk, [I, even though I'm a princess…..It's like I'm air], with tears. Shizuku interviened as she couldn't stand it any longer, and finally, Hajime and their pink barrier was removed. Was a bit of Kaori also a part of it? It seems to have been stronger than usual. Is it proof that Kaori's single-minded pursuit was overcoming Hajime…..

[~Kohon~. Back to what I was saying, just as Nagumo-san asked I've spread the rumors about the truth of the churches teachings but….unexpectedly, it seems to be going rather well. As expected, Aiko-san, no, "Goddess of Fertility" seems to have been effective]

[I see. …..Ma~a, people will believe in what they want to believe in, people will naturally get taken in the more it dramatically shakes their hearts. I expected that they'd believe it all without any

problems. All that's left, is to wait to see the actual effects….there's no knowing what'll happen after all]

[…..That's right. But, it's still hard to believe. What we've believed for years have been nothing but a fantasy…..my individual stance aside, it's inevitable that a panic will start in the public. As someone from the royal family, Nagumo-san's proposal was a god send]

Ririana bowed and thanked Hajime with a complex expression. Shizuku leaned her neck to the side and and asked, [About what?].

What Hajime and Ririana were talking about was, an explanation for the head temple's collapse to the people.

It's not possible to keep it under wraps forever, the royal palace needed to explain it eventually. However, according to the truth, the "Ehito-sama" which everyone believed in only saw them on the level of being toys and was a bastard who loved war, because everyone in the head temple of the church were a bunch of fanatics, they were all blown up to bits! If that was said it would only cause a panic to occur.

There, Hajime prepared a draft to explain the details and asked Ririana to explain it to the people based on what he had written on it.

It's contents were, reason, an evil god who wished for a war had brainwashed the church members and caused the Kingdom to be invaded. Reason, Aiko who was sent by god was anxious of the situation and fought voluntarily. Reason, the church members risked their lives and fought along with god's apostles and died as

martyrs in the end. Reason, In order to protect the Kingdom, Aiko's sword of light poured down, is what it said.

It's not true but it's not a lie either. It was roughly correct.

With that, Aiko as the "Goddess of Fertility" will further, "The evil god may have used Ehito-sama's name, for our own sakes, the true god that we believe in we shouldn't be something that we automatically believe in, we must become humans who are able to think for ourselves and decide when to take action for god. What's right? You must act upon your own judgement. That is what our true god believes in, and for those of the church who died as martyrs" have that kind of speech later at the memorial ceremony.

In other words, Hajime created a false "Evil Ehito" who was mistaken for the true "Good Ehito", the "Goddess of Fertility"'s speech will be the wedge which will plant recognition into the people's hearts. Even if Ehito's name was being talked about, whether it was the "Evil Ehito" or the "Good Ehito" wouldn't be distinguishable by the people, which would in turn make them think about what they should really believe in themselves.

This way, they're able to suppress the public panic of telling the truth that everything that they've believed from when they were born was nothing more than a fantasy, and also, it may become a source of resistance against god in the future……it's only a possibility though.

[I see now…..Nagumo-kun is actually thinking about a lot of various things huh. The talk about god too, leaving it up to Ai-chan to tell the story, and about todays things….]

[Did you mistaken me for some kind of muscle for brains or something? Ma～a, I thought of it on the spot, since it doesn't take much time or effort I decided to do it just this once, although we laid down the foundations…..]

[fufu, I didn't particularly think you were a muscle for brains. I'm saying that you're reliable. Just accept it as a complement]

Hajime shrugged his shoulders towards Shizuku's words. Shizuku glanced at such a reliable Hajime. Somehow the exchanges dispositions were shown, Yue and Kaori were both piercing their eyes onto Shizuku. Shizuku who noticed suddenly began to shake, [Eh, what? What is it?], she asked Yue and them.

[Yue, what do you think?]

[……N, it's still fine. It's still at the friend level]

[Right. "still" huh]

[……N. We need to be cautious]

Yue and Kaori were whispering to each other as they consulted about something. It made Shizuku feel extremely discomfortable. And Ririana became air once again.

Hajime looked at Yue and them with an amazed expression as if saying, what are you guys talking about?

Chatting Events of a Single Day -Third-

This is not meant to be a perfect translation, I cannot read japanese characters and this was carefully edited based on translations I got from my Machine Translator. Therefore, there are bound to be errors here and there! At best, this could be considered as an unedited Final Draft towards an Official Translation

Evening.

The red sky was spreading, peoples shadows were growing thin as it stretched, the shadow of a person stood still in front of a huge stone monument made from the stones from the mountain range at the northwest of the royal palace.

[I'm sorry….]

Right, the shadow of the person muttering was Aiko.

The monument towering in front of her, a so-called monument for the faithful who died in battle (A tower which symbolized praise to the souls who died while loyal to their country). It was for the people killed in action and victims who carried out their duties out of loyalty towards the Kingdom, their names were carved here without exception. Even now, there are lots of flower offerings and mementos left by people in front of the monument for those who have died.

Right now, although it's unconfirmed how many people's names were carved onto the stone but, Meld's name will also be added onto here.

Aiko gently placed weapons within the mementos left behind. It was the damaged western sword and spear. It was the artifacts of Aiko's students who passed away------Daisuke Hiyama and Reiichi Kondo.

Aiko voiced out her confession while alone, just what should I be conflicted with. That I wasn't able to bring back Hiyama and them back to Japan, or, because one of my students caused many people to die, or, everything including what I've done……

While AIko was looking down with a dejected atmosphere, she remained standing as if she was enduring something, ~Za zaa~ footsteps resounded. The violently echoing sound was likely to purposely inform others of their own existence approaching. Usually he wouldn't make such noises.

Aiko was startled and raised her face towards the sound.

[Nagumo-kun…..]

[What a coincidence, Sensei]

What was making that noise earlier was Hajime. His eyes were lightened up by the shine of the setting orange sun and stared right at Aiko. He had flowers in his hand. It's obvious to understand that he was there to offer flowers as tributes. Aiko showed a slightly unexpected expression towards his actions.

Hajime noticed that Aiko's expression and guessed that she was probably wondering what he was planning on doing, with a wry smile he placed the flowers onto the floral tribute stand.

[Even I feel like mourning for the dead people a bit, Sensei?]

[Eh? Ah, no, I mean, I don't particularly……]

Hajime suddenly talked to Aiko in an unexpectedly regrettable voice which caused Aiko to be shaken and tried to deceive him by waving her hands back and forth in a hurry. Then Hajime shrugged his shoulders like it was a joke and stood silently by Aiko.

As Aiko frequently glanced at Hajime, it appeared that Hajime was looking up at the huge stone monument and didn't particularly care about Aiko, he didn't seem to have any signs of talking either. Somehow, silence suddenly fell into the area and Aiko decided to reluctantly start a conversation.

[Eh~tto, those flower are…..is it…..for Hiyama-kun and them?]

[There's no way of that happening. It's for Meld]

Hajime raised an eyebrow and plainly replied at the wrong guess.

[For Meld-san…..]

[Ahh, though we weren't acquainted that much, I don't particularly hate people of his nature. Contrary to his position, he worry quite a lot, failed a lot, and was always trying to improve

himself…..although I'm only offering flowers its more along the feelings of "how regrettable" towards the people]

[Nagumo-kun…..that's right huh….]

Towards Hajime's words, Aiko's expression suddenly turned gentle. Even though Hajime mercilessly killed his enemies, he still had the proper feelings to mourn for a person's death so Aiko became happy at that. Her cheeks naturally loosened up that he purposely took the time to come and bring an offering.

Actually, Yue and them were taking a bath, he ran away when the women gave off a carnivorous glare in their eyes of wanting to take him into the bath room with them, since there was still time he became free, when he by chance glanced at the flowers being displayed in a vase, he thought, how about killing time by offering flowers? and he pulled some flowers from the vase but…..although his feelings about regret for Meld was real, he couldn't actually tell the truth.

Hajime was taking in the circumstances of the surroundings and frowned at Aiko who loosened her cheeks.

[You're not going to blame me…..]

[Eh?]

Towards Hajime's sudden words, Aiko tilted her neck.

[That thing about Hiyama. The circumstances were different from

Shimizu's case. It appears that he was eaten by a demon in the end but, I was the one who pretty much killed him. I killed another of Sensei's beloved students again? Kondo as well, although he was already dead, the one who pretty much destroyed his shape was me. …….I had thought that Sensei would have hit me once or twice out of anger]

[.....]

Aiko's smile was erased and she looked down once again. Hajime was silent. He wasn't pressing her for an answer. How much time was spent silently?.....Before long, Aiko began to gradually voice out her words.

[.....To be honest, I can't easily give out a clear answer. I don't believe that it can be forgiven that Hiyama-kun killed Shirasaki-san but, if possible, I would have liked that he live out his life to atone for those sins. It was shocking that Kondo-kun turned out like that. But, I can understand why Nagumo-kun was enraged and showed your strength. An important person was killed in front of your eyes…..with that, although it's against what I'd ideally want, you couldn't do anything but vent out your anger on them. ……Besides, I don't have the qualifications to blame Nagumo-kun]

Aiko crossed her arms and rubbed them both. It was as if her body was getting cold and she was trying to keep warm.

[Are you talking about what you did at the head temple?]

[.....]

A silent confirmation. Temporarily, although Aiko's mind's balance

was broken, Hajime and Teio had somehow reverted it back to normal with reproduction magic, once again, it appears that her mind is being worn down by her sense of guilt and ethics. If you looked carefully under her eyes, you'd notice that she had dark circles that she tried to cover up with makeup, it was clear that she wasn't able to sleep for the past several days. It's possible that she was having nightmares.

Silence descended down once again. Hajime didn't say anything and stood still. Was she unable to endure the atmosphere anymore? Aiko asked Hajime while lacking drive.

[……Is it……not painful for you Nagumo-kun?]

[Killing people? I don't particularly think it's painful……I think that that part of me probably broke when I fell into the abyss. That's why I can't sympathise with you]

[……..]

Towards Hajime's words, Aiko's face distorts in bitterness. Something important in Hajime was broken and, in a single strike, Aiko's state of mind further tightened up.

[…..No one…..blames me]

[Eh?]

Aiko leaked out her voice as if she couldn't endure it.

[No one blames me. The eyes of the children in our class doesn't look at me any differently, as for the Kingdom's citizens, they were looking at me with praise]

That was a fact. All classmates, had a strong impression from Hajime who was too gruesome in his battle, they didn't really have much feelings about Aiko's assistance in homicide, rather they were under the impression that Aiko fought for herself and took on the brunt of the load for their sakes, the Kingdom aristocrats and government officials were thankful that the brainwashing problem was solved.

[Though I've talked about it all to David-san and them, even they wanted a bit of time to think about and left it rather than immediately blaming me. Even though I robbed them of their important things]

Blood dripped from her lip that she bit. Aiko probably wanted to be blamed for it. The act of killing a person…..is heavy. As long as they're not a maniac or rotten person, normally their minds would be hurt by the blades named guilt and ethics. So for such people, taking the blame and accepting the punishment, are in a sense a kind of salvation.

Aiko herself probably unconsciously seeked for that. However, that wasn't given to her.

Although Hajime can agree that she played a part in overthrowing the church, he believed that even without Aiko, Teio would have still somehow managed to exterminate them someway or another, he thought that bearing the burden alone was a bit much, so as if he was troubled he scratched his cheek as he opened his mouth.

[Even if you say that, Sensei. The direct cause was due to Teio's breath, Sensei only helped out a little? I don't think you should take on the burden as if everything was your fault…..]

[Those kind of things don't matter! I certainly……understood the possibility of them being killed but I still helped Teio-san. That's no different than directly murdering them!]

Unexpectedly, Aiko gave out her rebuttal strongly. Aiko herself probably felt ashamed that she raised her voice as she shrank down apologetically. Looking at Aiko with a side glance, after a moment of silence, Hajime calmly asked.

[…..Do you regret it?]

[~……No, at that time, I was resolute with Teio-san…..because I couldn't overlook what the church was doing….to help you…..if that was left alone then the students would surely have had terrible experiences…..that's why…..]

While Aiko was holding back a painful voice, she replied that she "Had no regrets".

At that time, when she looked at Ishtar and them who had cornered Hajime, not just for Hajime but also for the sake of her students to not have to fight, her resolution to dirty her hands was real. Even now that was still unshaken. However, she was suffering while carrying the people who she's killed on her back, it wasn't something that reasoning could solve.

Hajime let out a small sigh that wouldn't be noticed by Aiko as he glanced towards the side at Aiko who looked like she was suffering. Why did a teacher like Aiko reveal such heavy feelings to a student like me. Even though I only came here to kill some time……he grieved in his mind.

And, suddenly, he recalled Aiko's feelings that Yue and Shizuku pointed out earlier in the day and worried if that was the cause. It appears that Hajime was leaving Aiko's student category in full-blast.

Hajime's eyes were wandering around. He was completely looking for words.

[About Sensei, will you still be a Sensei from now on?]

[Eh?]

Towards Hajime's abrupt question, Aiko's expression unintentionally became blank. And she remembered that she was asked the same question once before. At that time, she should have answered with confidence, [Naturally!]

[……]

Now she was unable to immediately answer. That was because she questioned herself if she should declare herself as a teacher after having killed people. Aiko was tightly clenching her teeth and her expression distorted. He understood that Aiko was having an extreme conflict whirling within her mind.

As if he expected it, on behalf of Aiko who couldn't answer, Hajime began to talk.

[If, Sensei says that she'll continue being our Sensei from now on……will you listen to my selfishness as a student]

[Selfishness…..is it?]

Aiko who had a bad complexion and seemed to collapse at any moment, showed a perplexed expression from the words that came out of Hajime's mouth.

[Yeah, my selfishness]

Hajime removed his sights from the monument while nodding and faced Aiko to match their eyes together. As she was being stared at Hajime, from somewhere within her, warmth was starting to well up and as if attracted by it Aiko also stared back.

After Hajime confirmed that he was firmly reflected in Aiko's eyes, he slowly said his words. Exactly as Hajime said before, they were hopelessly selfish words.

[Sensei…..I want Sensei to feel guilty about it. I want you to shoulder it's weight. Justly fighting, justly shouldering it, justly suffering, and justly complaining. To be human-like is slightly dazzling. I'm already unable to feel anything after all……you'll be a good example for me to not forget my "Humanity". So that's why,

continue shouldering it from now on. I'll properly watch such a human-like Sensei after all. If I do so then even after I return to Japan, I'll be able to live humanely]

[Nagumo-kun……]

Aiko's eyes opened up widely towards Hajime's words. She would have never thought in her dreams that he'd not blame her nor cheer her, but instead tell her to continue suffering from now on. But, towards that selfishness, in a sense, made her remember the shock which came from killing as it formed ominous clouds within Aiko's heart.

The results of her determination and actions were serious. All the more it was painful as well. She wanted to run away and almost became broken. Her natural character made it extra painful because she was determined and resolute.

But, when she looked at herself, she had people who were willing to help her. The important things that were lost, there's a person who can't feel but remember them.

Aiko thought.

------Ahh, how very selfish. What mercilessly gentle selfishness

A transparent drop ran down Aiko's cheeks. Everything she's endured up until now in order to not cry easily crumbled.

As Aiko was shedding tears, Hajime averted his glance and turned his back as he troubled conveyed the his last words.

[Ma~a, times when it's so painful that it seems like you'd break, by all means……since there's no one here…..since there's really~ no one here so it won't be embarrassing……I'll lend you my back]

[~....Really…..people like you are…..]

I'll pretend that I didn't notice that Aiko was crying? is what Hajime seemed to say as he showed his back, Aiko approached while smiling and crying and buried her face into his back.

[Then, I'll be borrowing it for a bit. …..Nagumo-kun]

[Alright, Sensei]

Aiko's cheeks loosened up because of Hajime's casual answer and she entrusted her body. While shedding tears as if they were everything she's saved up, she once again vowed. In other words, she'll continue being a teacher. And continue shouldering her sins. If a selfish student would be watching her then…..she felt like she'll be able to do her best.

The shadow of the two people expanded towards the east. As the night fell, the sounds of sobs resounded for a while.

After this, Hajime returned to the royal palace along with Aiko after she had finished crying but, while blushing randomly and looking down shamefully, Aiko was gracefully walking besides Hajime, to be honest, this may have done it……it goes without saying that he was breaking out in cold sweat.

And sure enough, Yue and them noticed and it's needless to say what happened when he was taken into their room. About this case, Shia and them and i, Yue's silent expressionless stare n particular was the most painful.

It should be noted, that they coincidentally met up with David and them of the temple knights as they returned to the royal palace but……it appears that, in the end their love for Aiko won.

To begin with, the reason why they accompanied Aiko as guards was due to various senses of values but, after being forcefully pulled away from Aiko when they returned to the Kingdom and was forced to descend the mountain without being confirming her safety made them start harboring doubt for the people of the church. Although they were considerably shocked when the truth of the church and god was revealed, as expected they still came to the conclusion that they couldn't hate Aiko.

Although they kinda had a feeling of complete desperation hanging around them…..from now on, while believing in the "Goddess of Fertility", they decided to revive and serve to protect the Kingdom as knights. Thinking about it again, it felt as if they carried a strange sublime feeling of love for Aiko but……surely they had lots of things to think about as well.

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[Enough already, really geez! Ok!]

[Hajime-kun…..please be a bit more cautious?]

[Fufufu, as expected of master, to deliver the final blow after we just looked away for a moment….]

In the dining room of the royal palace, while eating dinner, Shia's and their voices resounded out as if blaming something. Hajime who it was being directed at was just enjoying the meal in front of him as if it was someone elses problem.

Although Yue who was sitting to his right wasn't saying anything, her eyes looked at him as if she was looking at a troublesome person. When they heard of the circumstances, [Ma~a, guess It couldn't be helped then] is what they thought, clearly the feelings that Aiko has for Hajime inside of her was complex due to the fact that he was her student.

Moreover, after hearing Hajime's stance of "neglecting" Aiko's treatment, they somewhat harbored feelings of sympathy for Aiko.

[……Hajime. Does it seem like Aiko will be able to endure?]

Because they heard of the contents from Hajime, Yue was slightly worried and asked. As opposed to it, Hajime stopped eating and seemed to be thinking a little.

[N~, it's not alright? Worst case scenario, if it looks too dangerous I'll have to create an artifact to stabilize her mind using Spirit magic. Ma~a, even if we don't worry about it, with time, that person will be able to digest it in neatly]

[……I see, that's good]

As Yue's eyes loosened up, Hajime also smiled.

[As expected of…..Yue-san. With just one step, she gets ahead by two]

[Is this…..the difference between her and me? Ku, I won't lose! I won't lose!]

[Umu, should it be called naturally or something….it was a technique which touched masters heart as if completely natural…..If I had to say it, it's a godly skill. Obediently allow me to praise you]

[……Unwillingly evaluated]

Shia who was looking at her with a terrified expression, Kaori who looked mortified, and Teio who was feeling admiration. Yue's expression became bitter after being unexpectedly evaluated. Hajime smiled wryly as he stroke Yue's hair.

Among Hajime and his companions, in a sense as their feelings of getting along was firing up, an unexpected group came into the dining room. It was Kouki and them as well as his classmates. It appears that everyone including Aiko had come.

When Hajime looked at them for a moment, he frowned slightly. Beforehand, he heard of the times when they would be eating, he had thought that he would be able to comfortably eat with his companions but…..it appears that that plan was thrown off.

Ma~a, there's no need to anxiously consider it, Hajime renewed his thoughts as he continued eating his meal. Yue and them didn't particularly mind either.

But, it doesn't appear that his classmates thought the same, some people thought it was rather interesting, some people felt slightly awkward, and some people were lost as to what to do and became restless. Although they frequently glanced over, they were reminded of Hajime's previous statement that he didn't see them as companions and much less held much interest in it, so they were hesitant to call out to him. By the way, Aiko was staring at Hajime for a different kind of reason.

[Ah~, Shizuku-chan! Over here!]

[Kaori. Can I sit next to you?]

[Of course]

Kaori was showing a friendly smile with Nointo's cool face, Shizuku also naturally loosened her cheeks as she sat next to her.

At first It was still hard for the classmates to accept the fact that Kaori had changed her body but, the atmosphere of Kaori's image and smile allowed them to loosen up. Even if her body has changed, Kaori's peaceful atmosphere allowed her classmates hearts to relax. Or rather, when compared to the time when Hajime

lost his cool, it was only slightly nerve wracking, there were many classmates who were glad that Kaori had returned.

*It's funny cause the author didn't mention Ryutaro here*When Shizuku sat on the seat, Kouki sat on the seat next to her, and Aiko sat on the opposite side, while Suzu sat next to aiko. Aiko was right next to Yue. The other classmates proceeded to sit on the other remaining seats. Suzu looked at Yue as she sat, [Excuse me…..for sitting besides Oneesama!], she said with a strangely tensed expression. Yue said, [……Why Oneesama?] while tilting her head.

When Kouki and them took their seats, the excellent maids of the royal palace began to move together and set the table. It was practically the same menu that Hajime and them had.

Then, at that time, over Yue's head, Hajime and Aiko's glances connected. At once, Aiko's cheeks were lightly stained, she shamefully averted her eyes. Even still, she'd frequently glance back at Hajime, and secretly whispered out in a quiet voice.

[A, ano, Nagumo-kun…..sono, that thing from a while ago…..sono, if possible….]

Having to talk over Yue caused her to be a bit uncomfortable, most likely, as an adult, and, as a teacher, it was shameful to ask of Hajime so she kept quiet and decided to not say it.

Hajime guessed that Yue had decided to not mind it, and he thanked her within himself while looking at Aiko.

Suddenly her body was shaken and Aiko's ears began to be dyed as well. There was a feeling that it was too late now that their eyes had matched up, Shizuku and them paid attention to Aiko's appearance as she stared at Hajime. Fortunately, it was a blind spot for the other students so they weren't found out but, the relatively close frontlines-group classmates saw it and were rather suspicious.

[About what, Sensei. Was there something?]

[Fu～e?]

Naturally Hajime had decided to pretend not to know anything. Aiko was momentarily dimmed by that attitude but, she guessed that he was willing to keep it a secret, with a wry smile, [No, it's nothing], she answered. Although she was thinking that she was cowardly for having Hajime take care of it, she became happy and smiled because he was considerate.

When they saw Aiko's state, more and more, the female's began to turn their eyes onto Hajime. Only Yue was comforting Hajime by patting his shoulder, in addition, [Ah～n], as well. As expected of the true heroine. She was clearly different from the recent violent heroines of today.

Hajime was absorbed in his deep thoughts, as expected, Yue is the best lover! I don't know how many times I've "fallen for her again", Shia who sat on his opposite side began to tug on his sleeve.

[Hajime-san. Ah～n, desu]

It appears that rather than getting angry that her rivals in love seems to have increased, she judged that now seems to be the time for her to show her appeal. While blushing and glancing upwards, she gracefully presented a fork. At that point, she didn't forget to also quietly draw her Usamimis closer to Hajime as well. She was wonderfully cunning.

Hajime had no hesitations since they've been doing it for a while, and consumed it in a bite. As Hajime chewed it in his mouth, Shia's Usamimis were waving as if she was happy, incidentally, her bunny tail was also wiggling.

When such a spectacle was shown, Kaori and Teio couldn't afford to stay put either. Both of them panicked and thrusted their forks into their food.

[Ha, Hajime-kun, me too, ah~n!]

[Master. Please eat mistress's without delay. ah~nja]

[……Just this once]

No matter how many [Ah~n] were done, if the menu was the same then he'd get bored. That's why, he gave out a warning, the 2 [Ah~n]'ed as they responded to Hajime. With that he consumed both with a bite each. Kaori and Teio both had soft and warm expressions. *<-it's described as ほわん, basically that fulfilling look that anime characters get when they see cute things*

[What's with this atmosphere…..it's very uncomfortable…..]

Shizuku's cheeks cramped up as a pink barrier surrounded Hajime. Kouki and Ryutaro who was next to her and Suzu also felt uncomfortable. Only Aiko had thought for a moment if she should also do it, while she was scolding herself for thinking about it everyone else were already through with it.

The other school girls had an awkward air around them as the sweet air dispersed, as they stared at Hajime and them they began to, K~ya K~ya, and make a ruckus. The eyes which seemed to have looked at Hajime containing slight fears was now converted into a love story almost immediately. Since that day when he fell into hell, who would have thought that "he" would become the owner of this kind of harem…...the girl's eyes shined with curiosity and watched Hajime.

On one side, the boys as had slight fears like the girls but it turned into awe as they paid attention.

However, there were also glares of jealousy and envy which burned brightly that appeared here and there. After all, Hajime was surrounded by beautiful women and it wouldn't be an exaggeration to call them "peerless" beauties. Many eyes gazed on Shia in particular. As expected, even if they didn't have a geeky hobby, a girl with Usamimis accurately tickled the heart of a man. Furthermore the present Shia had a lovely smile as she was next to Hajime, occasionally, her Usamimi's that moved around had extremely destructive powers.

But, no matter how much they were consumed by jealousy and envy, would they get to know the secret to happily get along with beauties in a different world if they asked? but they couldn't say it. Once before, they called Hajime "incompetent" so they kept to themselves quietly, his overwhelming strength and unique

atmosphere he carried now was enough to make them lose their nerves.

Hajime was lightly ignoring his classmate's stares however for some reason, Kaori who he saw at the edge of his view was blushing while holding a fork…..

Kaori had allowed her eyes to swim around a bit and seems to have come to a conclusion about something, she apologetically used her fork to eat up the rest of her dish. And she blushed once again.

Instinctively, is it puberty! Hajime was tempted to tsukkomi but, before he could, Yue's severe tsukkomi came out. At the same time that Kaori who noticed that Yue was quietly watching her and aligned their eyes, those words came out.

[……Hentai] *<-Pervert*

[! Tha, that's wrong! What are you saying! I, I'm only eating as usual!]

[……Is what you say, but you're thoroughly enjoying Hajime's taste]

[A, am not! Be, besides, if you're saying such things then, Teio is the real hentai right! Look, she's magnificently licking the fork!]

[Rerorerorero, nmu?] *<-Rero = Licking noises*

Kaori refuted Yue with a bright red face, ~Bishi~! and pointed an Teio. Up ahead of that was Teio who was licking and savoring a normal fork with a blank look.

That's right, are there any problems? is what her expression was like, Teio was holding the fork in her mouth like nothing was wrong. She was clearly enjoying something else. She was through with some other kind of content. She was a huge M hentai, but it appears that she somehow evolved into a anything goes hentai somewhere along the line.

[Teio, stop that immediately. Or I'll send you flying]

Hajime warned Teio while his temple was twitching.

[Mu~u, I guess there's no other way. …..Master still hasn't kissed mistress yet. If I don't satisfy myself at times like these, I'll become frustrated]

Hajime's temple twitched more because for some odd reason he was criticized back. Then, at that time, Teio suddenly recalled something and her eyes started shining.

[That's right! Master! I haven't received my reward yet! Mistress desires the promised reward!]

[Ah? "Reward"?]

Towards Teio's words, for a moment Hajime was thinking, [What are you talking about?], as he frowned, then he immediately recalled and clicked his tongue ~Chi~. The people who didn't know what they were talking about tilted their heads, as the

representative, Shia asked.

[What do you guys mean……by reward?]

[Umu, at the head temple where Sensei-dono was entrusted to me, I was promised that I would be rewarded if I kept her safe until the end. Nufufufu…..master. You're not thinking about going back on your promise right?]

Shia and Kaori both, [That's sly!], and made a ruckus, Teio urged that the promise be kept while laughing heartily. Somehow or another, everyone's attention were gathering, Hajime had an unpleased look as he turned towards Teio.

[And? What's your wish? Though I'll say it first, I'll only do what's "within my range" alright?]

Implying that just like the time with Shia's reward, requests like *sex*"Hold me" won't be allowed? Teio also seems to have guessed his intentions and she nodded exaggeratedly that she understood it. And while blushing and fidgeting, she said her demand.

[Be relieved, I won't be asking anything unreasonable. It's~, just like when we first met…..I want you to tease mistress's ass]

With both hands on her cheeks, [K~ya! I said it!], Teio seemed to be implying as she ~Iyan Iyan~'ed. Because it's already been done once, it wouldn't be unreasonable? And completely disregarded the abnormality of the contents as she asked for an unreasonable demand. As expected of a Hentai.

Sure enough, all humans other than Yue and them were intensely shocked by those remarks.

Their eyes turned towards Hajime, it was the same eyes as if looking at a criminal.

[Rejected, this worthless dragon. Don't go saying remarks that remarkably invite misunderstandings!]

Towards Hajime who plainly rejected the demand, Teio made an expression as if she was shocked and intensely protested.

[Wh, why! It shouldn't have been an unreasonable demand! Just like at that time, I just want you to thrust your thick and hard, black rod into mistress's ass! Just like that time when you were always grinding up and quickly pulling it out while ignoring mistress's pleas! I want you to relentlessly torment mistress's ass!]

[I've already said it! Quit saying remarks that invite misunderstandings!]

The gazes being directed at Hajime turned into eyes as if looking at a devil.

[……But, It's not a complete misunderstanding right?]

Yue and them, [Ah]'ed, Aiko who seemed to have been slightly

displeased expression called out to Hajime with thorns attached.

[……Certainly, you didn't say any lies]

[Actually, it was stuck…..]

[Un, Nagumo-kun was completely merciless]

The classmates' doubts changed into conviction after hearing Aiko and the Ai-chan bodyguards such as Sonobe and the others voiced their thoughts.

[……Hajime-san, as expected calling it a misunderstanding is a little……]

[……Hajime. Hajime was the cause of Teio's Hentai transformation. It can't be helped]

Unexpectedly Shia and Yue had betrayed him.

[Na, Nagumo-kun…..people like you……what have you done to Teio-san…..]

[Hajime-kun……how envio-……I mean, you have to take responsibility]

The gazes directed at Hajime were like eyes that were looking at a demon lord.

Hajime slowly stood up without a word and stretched out his right hand upwards. In front of everyone who was wondering what he was going to do, Hajime pulled out the black stake for Pile-bunker out of the “Treasure Warehouse”. For some reason, the stake was already giving out red sparks as he pulled it out.

Cold sweat ran down Teio’s cheek.

[OK, Teio. Lets give you your reward. Eh? You want it rammed up your ass right? Rejoyce, its much thicker and harder than before, it’s an excellent piece which I can boast about. You won’t even have time to pant, you’ll die in an instant]

Teio had realised, [This is bad, I got too full of myself].

Pile-bunker being used on Teio was the results of a fight, while being viewed with eyes as if looking at a pervert, Hajime simply went berserk. By the way, if you looked objectively, it certainly wasn’t a misunderstanding when pointed out.

[W, wait a bit, master. What I said a while ago was only an example, I didn’t say that you had to use it again? As expected, if something like that is used I’ll end up dying! I’ll apologise so, quickly, put that away!]

[Don’t hold back Teio. You want this right? What, did you want to waste precious time to go to a room. I’ll pierce you here]

[Hi~n, master’s eyes are serious~! Yue, Shia, Kaori~, stop master already! Help me~!]

As Hajime approached while gushing out sparks and crackles, Teio became teary eyed and asked for Yue and them for help. As expected, she didn't want the punishment of dying in a single blow. But, her cheeks were slightly blushed and her breathing was rough, it seems that her performance ran deep.

Hajime looked at Teio who was clinging onto Kaori and hiding behind her, and with his upset feelings washed away he, ~Fu~n~, snuffled with his nose, the stake was returned into the "Treasure Warehouse" and he returned to his seat. However, the classmates didn't lose their evaluations of him being a demon lord. Later, two kinds of names spread throughout the Kingdom about the "White haired eyepatch wearing demon king" but……if Hajime had known that he would have gone insane.

[Ha~a, and? The reward itself doesn't really matter but, don't you have a more decent demand?]

Hajime let out a sigh as he got back to his seat, it was a sigh of relief in various meanings. The scene where the ass of a beautiful young woman that was about to happen in front of their eyes was well over the capacity for the high school students.

[U, umu. Then, let's see, the rights of laying on the bed with you? See, it's always Yue and Shia who gets to be next to master right? Mistress has never slept next to master before. That's why, tonight, I want to sleep next to master, how about it?]

[Something of that degree is cheap. …..Or rather just say that from the start]

[Mistress's passion surged out, it's not something I can control so easily. Accept it]

Teio who was ashamed was wiggling with a surprised expression, when she looked at Shia who was next to her, Shia said, [There's no helping it then huh~] and shrugged her shoulders. It appears that, tonight, he'll be sleeping between Yue and Teio. But, while in bed, Hajime would be sandwiched by something else…..

The school girls were making a ruckus again as they went, K~ya K~ya, and the male students were beginning to utter out some kind of curse.

Additionally, Aiko, sleeping with multiple females is immoral! began to give out a teacher-like (Actually, she probably held a lot of personal resentment) preach, on the other hand, with Shia and Yue's relation exposed she was objecting against it now, Yue leaned on Hajime and stuck out her tongue and released her bewitching atmosphere after finishing her meal, because of that the classmates were further heated up, and some boys were unable to stand up straight anymore…..and, the dining room's atmosphere was filled with chaos.

While ignoring the noisy girls uproars, Hajime decided to recall what happened today.

They free falled from [Kamiyama] and appeared with Kaori whose body was replaced, they went to the adventurers guild and created a "Gold" ranked man-woman, played a grand game of tag with the craftsmen of the Kingdom which caused great confusion, allowed the royal family to gain control of the situation, beated up the to-be king and he also lost his first crush.

In order to kill time, by chance, he met up with Aiko and she revealed her heavy worries, and while having dinner expecting to relax it turned into a disturbance. These were the events which happened to Hajime in a day at the Kingdom. It may be Hajime's fate to be a maelstrom of confusion and disturbances.

Tomorrow, Hajime and them will be taking Ririana and them and leaving the Kingdom. Hajime and them have no intentions of entering the Empire's capital at all……Surely, "without a doubt" probably isn't possible.

As expected, what really lies on the grounds towards the east…..Hajime had a premonition of the new disturbances to come, while feeling the softness and warmth of Yue who was hugging his arm, ma~a, whatever it is, he shrugged his shoulder.

Those guys once again

This is not meant to be a perfect translation, I cannot read japanese characters and this was carefully edited based on translations I got from my Machine Translator. Therefore, there are bound to be errors here and there! At best, this could be considered as an unedited Final Draft towards an Official Translation

The thick clouds underneath them were quickly passing by. The grass plains and trees were overlapping with the clouds, occasionally a small village could be seen, but as expected it would be quickly left behind in no time at all. It was supposed to going at a considerable amount of speed but, some kind of barrier was placed which made the breeze comfortable.

Someone's ponytail trademark was drifting in the comfortable breeze, It was Shizuku who was watching the scenery before her eyes, and she changed her glance over towards the sun which shone brightly overhead.

The blessing of lights seen from clouds, if we reached out would we be able to grasp it? it was so close that it could be mistaken as so. Shizuku was leaning her back on the handrail while blocking the sunlight with her hand, as if looking far into the distance, she suddenly muttered something as if she was tired from just thinking about it.

[.....Who would have expected that he built an airship. .....He can already do everything huh]

Right, the place where Shizuku was currently at was the rear deck of the airship "Feruniru" that Hajime created.

This Feruniru was mainly made out of gravity stones and induction stones, along with other various functions built in, it was their new way of transportation. The reason why they've never used it up until now was solely because Hajime had thought that it was too early.

Though it wasn't difficult to move something through gravity stones, the bigger the mass became the more you needed to be experienced in Creation magic. As far as the Cross bitts go, they had a limit of being able to only lift up 1 person.

However, through the results of pilling on training between several intervals of time, he finally became skilled enough to freely operate a large floating mass, the compiled data was then used to create the airship, "Fenuniru". Since they've left the Kingdom, everyone was doubting Hajime as they gathered at the grass plains on the outskirts of the Kingdom without a wagon nor a car which ran on magic, when Hajime showed Fenuniru he had a triumphant look on his face.

[It's commonsense that flight transportation devices are obtained near the end of a journey]

Is what he said while full of confidence.

This Feruniru was 120 meters in length and in the shape of a devil fish, inside of it contained halls that led to the bridge towards the front and living quarters at the center, furthermore there was also a kitchen and room to take baths. Though I say that, because they're able to travel to the Empire which usually takes 2 months by

carriage in only 1 and a half days, how much the utilities are going to be used is unknown. Even just floating in the sky consumes quite a bit of magical power. If it wasn't Hajime, then using it for long times would be impossible.

[So this was where you were……Shizuku]

[Kouki…..]

As Shizuku was recalling Hajime's words and tsukkomied in her mind, just what about this is commonsense?, she was called out to.

When Shizuku looked towards the voice, Kouki's face appeared from the hatch that just opened up. Kouki came straight up besides Shizuku and with both arms on the handrail, he began to look towards the clouds that were in the distance.

And he started to mutter something.

[This is…..incredible]

[That's right. ……I'm already tired of being surprised at every little thing]

Naturally, what Kouki was talking about was the airship Feruniru. However, his expression showed no colors of admiration, it was somewhat discouraged and at the same time, mortifying.

[Hows everyone else?]

[Ryutaro and the imperial guards are eating what Shia-san cooked for them. Suzu is chatting with Riri. …..Nagumo is…..flirting around. At the bridge laying down and relaxing…..]

The reason they accompanied Hajime was to keep their promise of protecting and sending off princess Ririana and her imperial guards to the Empire, and it was only Kouki's Hero party. The remaining students who couldn't fight were left with Aiko, the Nagayama front-forces as well, they decided to protect the Kingdom while Kouki and them weren't there.

To begin with, the long-distance transfer that Freed left behind at the Kingdom gave them a hint, there was an artifact that allowed them to return at anytime, if Kouki and them asked Hajime they'd be able to return immediately.

Shizuku glanced towards Kouki who was a biting his words. Shizuku could somehow sympathized with his behavior, she scratched her cheek and showed a wry smile as if asking, what's up, and talked.

[What is it, you seem pretty dissatisfied? Does it not sit well with you that Nagumo-kun is popular?]

[……It's not like that]

Shizuku called out while poking fun at him, Kouki's expression seemed to have been ill-humored and replied bluntly.

[……Being able to create something this amazing…..and being

insanely strong…..why is it that he's able to act so nonchalantly like that. …..Why was he so easily able to abandon them….]

[……..]

It appears that Kouki is still not comfortable with Hajime's judgement to not fight god and abandon this world. If he himself had that much power then he'd go off and save the world from god himself……while he was thinking about that, Shizuku completely understood what he meant.

[……He's probably already chosen]

[chosen?]

Shizuku's reply which she muttered made Kouki turn his glance at her again. While Shizuku was looking far into the distance, she took her time to choose her words.

[He is…..probably not as free as he appears? Perhaps, even though he looks calm, I think he's probably always "frantic". He's always "frantically" trying to survive with his important people]

[…….]

[He's already said it too right? You don't do something because you've gained power, because you want to do something you use power. Right now what you're feeling is the "difference", it wasn't something that he had from the beginning. "Incompetent", "Good-for-nothing", while being told such things, he crawled up from the bottom and obtained it. …..Literally, what he obtained at the end was determination and resolution. Not In order to defeat god, nor save the world. It's much simpler, it's for those who are close to him…..it's completely different from us who "because we can, we

will”. That’s why, even if hes being told “because you can, then do it”, he won’t easily nod and agree with it. Because, he didn’t obtain power for that purpose, if he looks the other way and loses his most important things then he’d obtain nothing out of it….]

[.....I don’t really understand]

[U～n. Though it may be a bit different, look, in order to become the boxing world champion I worked hard, since you’re strong, wipe out all the evil in the town! saying something like that just doesn’t work out?]

[Mu….when you say it like that…..but, what’s on the line are the lives of the people of this world]

Midway in, Kouki stubbornly refuted Shizuku while his eyebrows were in a /\ shape.

[Ma～a, not being able to leave behind people in need is one of your good traits but…..that’s only Kouki’s senses of value so you shouldn’t force them onto Nagumo-kun]

[.....What’s with that, do you have his back on this?]

[What childish things are you saying. I’m simply talking about people in general? Besides, I’m sure you haven’t forgotten it, somehow or another Nagumo-kun has saved numerous people including us. It was the same for the town of Ulu as well, Kaori also said that he saved the Ankaji dukedom too. It seems he also wiped out the hidden organization that took part in human trafficking at Fuyuren and he also rescued Myu who was a Umininzoku child and returned her to her mother too. ……As for us, I don’t think we’ve done much to save the people from this world?]

[That’s……]

[Surely for himself…..he’d only act for those who are important to him such as Yue and them…….fufu, thinking about that,

eventually he might “Take the opportunity” to send god flying away?]

[What’s with that, that pitiful god….]

While thinking of such silly things, Shizuku laughed as she thought that it was possible in the future if it was Hajime. Kouki had a complicated expression but, he didn’t have the strength to deny Shizuku’s words so he tsukkomied and stopped at that. For a while, a time of silence passed by. Shizuku guessed that Kouki was thinking while carrying conflicted feelings within himself again and decided to not say anything.

Then, at that time, Feruniru which had flown in a straight course and fixed speed suddenly went off course. Kouki and Shizuku were wondering what happened since if they just flew straight they’d reach the Empire.

[.....Did something happen?]

[For the time being, shall we go back inside]

The two nodded in consent and quickly returned into the ship.

~~~~~~

When Shizuku and Kouki entered the bridge, everyone had already gathered around the crystal like object at the center.
~~~~~~

[What happened?]

[Ah, Shizuku-chan. Un, for some reason people are being chased by the Empire's soldiers]

Kaori answered Shizuku who asked. What Kaori pointed towards in cubic crystal was, several Usagininzoku's running through a valley, behind them were approaching empire soldiers who were playing a real game of tag with them.

This crystal was created with the "Distant Viewing Stone" and "Distance Transmitting Stone" through Creation magic, it was possible to project the image of the distant surroundings with the crystal installed in the bridge, in simple terms, it was a telescope which was capable of projecting an image.

When Shizuku looked at the crystal display, certainly, there were 2 Usagininzoku women between a narrow valley without any flowing water, they seemed to be worrying as they ran away from the Empire soldiers who were approaching behind them. Behind the approaching Empire soldiers were several large transportation carriages, rather than chasing them from the beginning, did they escape instead? Or were they trying to catch the Usagininzoku's that they found by chance?

It appears that Hajime and them saw the situation and slowed down Feruniru. Normally he'd just ignore it but, because it was Shia's race he decided to be concerned about it.

[Isn't this bad! If we don't immediately help them!]

Kouki shouted out as expected. It seemed like he'd jump out at any moment even though they were in the sky.

However, Hajime didn't answer the rushing Kouki, he drew his eyebrows closer to the crystal display and looked at it suspiciously.

[Oi, Nagumo! Surely you're not intending to abandon those girls are you!? If you won't be helping then I'll go! Hurry and let me down!]

[Shia, these guys are…..]

[Eh? ……Ar～e? These 2 are…..]

Hajime ignored the raging Kouki and called out to Shia. Shia also seems to have noticed now that they zoomed in on the image.

[Why are you two so laid back! Their the same race as Shia-san right! Do you think nothing of it!]

[I'm sorry, you're a bit noisy so could you quiet down for a bit? …..Hajime-san, there's no doubt about it. It's Rana-san and Mina-san]

[As expected huh. ……Because of their sudden change in condition I had a hard time remembering. ……These guys movements and expressions…..fumu]

Kouki's opinion was completely cut off by Shia and he instinctively became quiet. By the way, the reason why Kouki was addressing Shia with "San" was due to the results of her introducing herself by her first name with a refreshing smile, but Shia had said to just call

her by her first name without adding honorifics with a smile.

In the meantime, the two Usagininzoku women stopped moving their legs as they fell onto the ground. Their current position was at a slightly more open valley.

When he saw that, Kouki regained his senses and decided that he'd leave the bridge and go to the front deck. Though there's still quite some distance between them, for the time being he was intending to shoot magic to attract the Empire soldiers attention.

[Ma~a, wait. Amanogawa. It's fine]

[Wha, what are you saying! Those feeble women seem like they'd be attacked at any moment!]

~Ki~ Kouki glared at Hajime in frustration, However, Hajime was smiling from ear to ear and muttered like something was interesting as he looked at the crystal display.

[Feeble? No way. Those guys are…..the "Hauria" you know?]

What are you saying? immediately after Kouki's doubtful expression, [Ah!], someone's astonished voice sounded out. When Kouki looked towards the crystal display to see what happened, what was there was……a mountain of corpses consisting of Empire soldiers who were beheaded or pierced accurately through the head by an arrow.

[.....Eh?]

Not just Kouki but everyone who didn't know of the Hauria tribe became dot eyed. In the meantime, feeling suspicious that the forces which left the transportation wagons weren't returning after they went to chase the Usagininzoku, they decided to send out several scouts.

And, when those scouts found the mountain of their comrades corpses, they called out to the two Usagininzoku women who were at the center leaning on one another and shaking as they approached in a threatening voice.

They may have usually been much more careful of their actions after suddenly finding a mountain of their comrades corpses but, before them were the pet slaves who had absolutely no fighting power. They approached while upset but had no caution. They got closer.

The moment when one of the scouts was about to grab one of the Usagininzoku woman by her Usamimis, an arrow shot out from somewhere and pierced through the scout behind him in the head. When the scout noticed the sound of the man collapsing on the the ground and convulsing, he looked back.

In front of him, the Usagininzoku woman who should have been trembling in fear got up without a sound, at some point she was already wielding a short sword in her hand and the scout in front of her was easily beheaded.

And the other Usagininzoku woman also immediately kept a low posture as she crawled on the ground towards the beheaded man who was falling sideways and easily reaped the head of the last scout who was stunned towards the sudden situation.

The head popped off as if it was a toy, Kouki and them, [U～], became pale faced and held their mouths. Princess Ririana and her imperial guards instinctively stared at Shia when the impossible scene of the Usagininzoku killing the Empire soldiers were shown. The special one wasn't only you!? with their eyes opened wide in surprise.

[No, without a doubt I'm the only special one? There's no way that there would be so many just like me. That was the results of training for them. …..Hajime-san placed them into a hell which couldn't be lukewarm, it was training which could be called devil remodeling, that kind of feeling]

[[[[[……]]]]]

Everyones line of sight turned towards Hajime. Their eyes all clearly expressed the same things. In other words, [It was you again!?]. Hajime abruptly averted his eyes.

In the meantime, the situation was coming to its final stages. The remaining empire soldiers and the transport wagon finally reached the slaughter site. The Empire soldiers foot completely came to a stop when they noticed the appearance of their comrades that were scattered on the road to block them.

They couldn't just advance on ahead by trampling on the corpses as if nothing happened, above all they became intensely agitated as

they made a ruckus.

And the Hauria tribe didn't let that chance go by. No, everything may have been done for the sake of that chance to appear. The remaining Empire soldiers numbered 12. The Hauria tribesmen jumped out from both sides of the cliff, suddenly they appeared but even with the 2 women from before their numbers was only 5 people. However the Hauria tribesmen who jumped at them were better prepared to fight against the Empire soldiers, 3 heads were sent flying, and 1 person was shot right through the middle of their forehead by an arrow.

The Hauria didn't let up their fierce attacks. Just like the flowing water, they attacked the Empire soldiers as a group.

The moment that one of the Empire soldiers managed to grab their sword, a Hauria would jump from the side and immediately cut their head off.

Arrows came flying towards the Empire soldiers from the front. It's speed was unlike those before it, they were transparent and the instant they tried to clear away as the Empire soldiers read where the arrow was going, a different Usagininzoku would come in from their blind spot and cut off their head.

While the Empire soldiers gave out a courageous roar as they approached and kicked the heads of the beheaded soldiers. The moment that their eyes were fixed onto the Haruia who were unforgivable due to their angered hearts, a different Hauria suddenly appeared behind their backs and beheaded them.

When you thought it was the right, they came from the left, when you thought they were in front, they came from the back, there were no restrictions, the Empire soldiers were at the mercy of the ever changing attacks. It didn't take much time……until their heads flew through the air.

[Is, is this supposed to be the Usagininzoku…….]

[Seriously……]

[Rabbit's are scary….]

Mutters filled with horror were heard on the bridge of Feruniru.

[Fu~n, their proficiency hasn't dropped at all. It doesn't seem like they skipped out on training. ……But, their ending was a bit weak]

As Kouki and them were still stunned with open mouths, Hajime pulled out Schlagen and opened up a part of the windshield and pushed the muzzle outside with a standing shooting posture. There was still around 5 kilometers before the site. Everyone besides Yue and them were popeyed, Hajime was smiling and looking straight ahead without moving. Then he gently pulled the trigger.

Doba~an!!

The sound of an explosion was heard and a line flashed through the sky from Schlagen which gave off bright red sparks.

It blew up the head of the Empire soldier who jumped out of the carriage and was about to cast magic on the Hauria. There were also Empire soldiers in the carriage. With “Distant View” in Hajime’s magic eye, he was able to detect the surge of magic building up, he had noticed that the soldier was planning an ambush attack so he sniped him from Feruniru.

On the crystal display, it showed the Hauria tribesman's surprised expressions when the ambushers head was completely blown off. They immediately traced the line of trajectory and noticed Feruniru that was flying in the sky.

Normally they’d become cautious with the attack that came from a mysterious flying object but…..In the next instant their expressions became joyful.

A boy with a crossbow on his shoulder jumped out from the shadows of the rocks and smiled fearlessly! and decided to wildly salute. They seemed to have noticed who the person who shot out that flash was. It was to be expected of them. A bright red flash was a classic symbol of their boss who they loved and respected…..

The Hauria tribesmen saluted the boy whom they followed gladly. There appearances were seen reflected on the crystal display and once again everyones gazes turned towards Hajime. This time their eyes contained a lot of amazement. What kinds of things did he have to do to make the gentle Usaginizokus turn into that, Kouki and the others had eyes that silently questioned that.

[Hajime-san, Hajime-san. Let’s quickly get down. To be doing this kind of thing outside of the Sea of Trees…..maybe they’ve run out of control again…..]

Kouki and them watched as Shia rushed Hajime. From the Hauria tribesman's strategy, they were clearly aiming for the Empire's transportation force, it appears that, they took a trip outside of the Sea of Trees in order to kill Empire soldiers which caused Shia to became worried if they were intoxicated by battle again and ran out of control.

Hajime had thought from their appearances that there was no way of that happening but, because Shia had an anxious face, Hajime himself became slightly interested and decided to land Feruniru in the valley.

When Hajime and them got off at the valley, there were a lot of Demi-humans there besides the Hauria. There seems to have been about 100 people. It appears that that contents of the transportation wagons were Demi-humans. Besides Usagininzokus, there were Kitsuneninzoku*Fox* as well as Inuninzoku's*Dog* too, Nekoninzoku*Cat*, and many women and children Morininzoku*Forest People/elves*. Everyone looked at Hajime and them with cautious eyes, they weren't able to hide their surprise at the flying vehicle which they've never seen nor heard about before. It certainly was an encounter with the unknown.

And, with 80% of those who were surprised, a boy with a crossbow on his shoulder ran through the other 20% of Demi-humans who were confused and cautious, he immediately appeared before Hajime and performed a splendid salute with his back straightened.

[It's been a long time, Boss! I've been awaiting the day when we meet once again! I've never thought that you'd appear again like this, I'm once again impressed! Also for helping us a while ago, I

thank you!]

[Yo～o, it's been a long time. Ma～a, don't mind what happened earlier. Since it was you guys, you'd likely be able to take on that kind of damage. ….You've guys have improved quite a bit]

When Hajime had a smile on his face and said that, 2 women and 3 men with Usamimis had come out from the dumbfounded Demi-humans and saluted just like the boy with Usamimis, their eyes were beginning to water up because of their overflowing emotions. And, while wonderfully harmonizing their voices and their arranged heels sounding out.

[[[[[[We're grateful, Sir!!]]]]]]

The Hauria's voices trembled and echoed through the valley. They were moved enough to tears, but they didn't cry as their boss who they hold in high esteem praised them of their growth. Everyone looked up towards the empty sky and seemed to have held back the tears that were about to pour out. It appears that they put in slightly too much effort into holding the tears back as their eyes became bloodshot and scary. Hajime, Yue, and Shia were calm but, Teio and Kaori in the back, Kouki and them and Ririana and them were completely taken aback.

[Ehtto, It's been a long time everyone! It's great that you're energetic above all else. By the way, where are father and them? Is it just you guys Pal-kun? Also, why are you guys in such a place, going against the Empire soldiers…..]

[Please calm down, Shia-anego*older sister, extremely humble way*. If you don't ask one at a time I won't be able to answer? For the time being, right now there's only the 6 of us here. There are various circumstances, lets find a calm place where we can talk in

detail. ….And also, it’s not Pal-kun, its “Baltoferd of Certain Death”. Please don’t make mistakes?]

[……Eh? Did you tsukkomi me just now? Or rather you’re still taking up that name…..Rana-san and you guys should also be cautious]

Pal was the same as always and Shia massaged her temple as she endures her headache. However, the opinion to move to a different place was reasonable, for the time being she’ll not press them any further, Shia gave out a warning to the woman Rana as well as the other members to not follow Pal’s lead and change their names.

But, the reality was already something that went above expectations.

[……Shia. It’s not Rana…….its “Rana Inferna of Swift Shadows”]*I think, 疾影のラナインフェリナ*

[!? Rana-san!? What are you saying……]

Out of the Hauria’s, Rana had a firm older sister feeling, Shia’s cheeks start cramping up as she never thought this would happen. However the Hauria’s furious attacks didn’t stop. Attacking through waves of cooperation was their strengths.

[I’m, “Minasteria the Sky Render”!]*空裂のミナステリア*

[!?]

[I’m, “Yaozerias of Mighty Illusions”!]*幻武のヤオゼリアス*

[!?]

[I’m, “Yorugandal of Crawling Decapitation”!]*這斬のヨルガンダル*

[!?]

[Fu～, I’m “Liquid Break of Light Rain”]*霧雨のリキッドブレイク*

[!?]

Everyone had extremely triumphant looks as they took on poses like joO*＜-reference which im sure i balls’ed up big time, 全員が凄まじいドヤ顔でそれぞれジョ○的な香ばしいポーズを取りながら* as they introduced their second name. Shia’s expression was dyed in despair. It appears that, the boom of Hauria having 2 names (Chunii) was here. At this rate, the possibility of everyone in the whole clan having them is high. By the way, their official names were only two characters in their heads.*＜-not sure what this line was for, i may have screwed up*

The family which she’s reunited with after a long time turned into a situation where they took on poses with triumphant looks while declaring their second name, Shia’s appearance was quite pitiful as she spat out ectoplasm from her mouth. That’s why, Hajime was going to warn them that after several years they’d writhe around on the ground due to the embarrassment whenever they recalled their expressions.

However before he could, a stray bullet shot out from Pal.

[By the way, Which is better boss, “Crimson Flash of Rondo” or “White Claws and Fangs of Gale”?]*Probably wrong 紅き閃光の輪舞曲(ロンド) and 白き爪牙の狂飆(きょうひょう)*

[.....What?]

[Boss's second name. It was a heated discussion at the clan meeting for 10 days, somehow we've managed to narrow it down to these 2. However, we need to find out which is the best in the end, it was settled as a tie after fighting among the clan…..since its come to this, we were to entrust it to boss's judgement after reuniting. By the way, I'm on the "Crimson Flash of Rondo" side]

[Wait, since when was it required to have 2 names?]

[Boss, I'm firmly on the "White Claws and Fangs of Gale" side]

[No, listen to what I'm saying. I….]

[What are you saying Rana Inferna of Swift Shadows. No matter how you think about it, Boss perfectly fits "Crimson Flash of Rondo"!]

[No, kora, enough of this…..]

[That's right! He releases sparks of red magical power, master of various weapons and able to freely run around the skies, it's exactly "Crimson Flash of Rondo"! This is the best JK]*＜- unable to actually understand what this meant, これ一択だろJK*

[Stop it, anymore of that shameful commentary is----]

[Oioi, Yorugandal of Crawling Decapitation. If you say that then, that trademark white hair that waves around as he carries his powerful weapons in both hands called his claws and fangs and attack in waves like a storm, there's no other way of expressing it than "White Claws and Fangs of Gale", why can't you understand? Since when have you become so senile?]

[.....]

Ectoplasm began to flow from Hajime's mouth. It appears that the surprise present of their embarrassing commentary was making his mind reach it's limit. As they were getting along well with each

other, unknown energy were flowing in the back of Hajime and Shia's mouths, ~Bufu~! the sound of it spouting resounded.

[Shi, Shizu Shizu, it's not nice to laugh, Bufu~!]

[Su, Suzu's laughing as well….Kufu….I wonder….have they been infected with chunii, fu, fufu~]

When Hajime regained his senses and looked behind him, Shizuku and Suzu's shoulders were shaking as were desperately trying to keep in their laughter. Although they were unable to keep it in at all.

For the time being, Hajime decided to shoot Pal and them who were having their heated discussion with rubber bullets and then turned towards Shizuku and Suzu with a reproachful look as they gradually shook.

[Yaegashi, for the cool you, I'll forcefully give you a twintail ribbon as a present later. Of course I'll also keep image recordings of it]

[!]

[Taniguchi, I'll shorten your height by another 5 centimeters]

[!]

Shizuku and Suzu's laughing immediately stopped and they trembled in fear. Even if it was unreasonably misplaced anger, if Hajime became serious then the 2 wouldn't be able to oppose him. And Hajime's eyes were completely serious.

[Ano……is this a good time?]

While avoiding the Hauria that were floundering on the ground, Shizuku and them were protesting Hajime's unreasonableness, the voice which called out was a beautiful girl from the feet up, she was a slender beauty who had long blond hair and blue eyes. From her sharp pointy ears they could tell that she was a Morininzoku. Hajime had felt that she kinda looked like one of Fair Bergen's elders, Alfrerick.

[Are you without a doubt Nagumo Hajime-dono?]

[N? That's certainly right but…..]

When Hajime nodded, the beautiful blond haired blue eye Morininzoku gave out a relieved sigh as she patted her chest. To begin with, both of her thin hands were bound by metal handcuffs, it seems to have been quite a pitiful state. Her ankles also had shackles with chains fixed on it, every time she walked her white skin turned red as it rubbed her skin.

[Then, is it fine to believe that you won't capture us and enslave us? I've heard from my grandfather that your senses of value for your own race is for better or worst, equal for everything. You would not toy with us Demi-humans…..]

[Grandfather? Is it possibly Alfrerick?]

[That is correct. I'm sorry for the delay but, I am, the only granddaughter of Alfrerick an elder of Fair Bergen, Arutena Haipisuto]

[An elder's granddaughter was captured……it appears that there really were various circumstances]

Speaking of being the granddaughter of an elder, she's practically the princess of the Morininzoku, naturally, they should have also had firm escape methods and guards in case of emergencies. Without being able to use them, or it could be said that even if they used them they'd still get caught, that just shows how tight the situation was. As expected, something happened at the large tree? Hajime frowned as it was becoming increasingly necessary to hear Pal and their stories as he sharpened his glance.

In this situation, Hajime called out to Pal and them while ignoring Arutena's odd continuous stare.

[Oi, you guys. Bring over all the Demi-humans. Incidentally. I'll send you guys to the Sea of Trees]

[Yes, Sir! Ah, I'm sorry about this but, boss. I want to contact a comrade who's lurking on the Empire's outskirts, may I leave midway in?]

[Ahh, that works out just fine, we have a few guys here that we'll be sending to the Empire, I'll unload you guys a bit away from the Empire together]

[Thank you very much!]

Currently, Hajime and them were currently not to far away from the Empire. The fact that the Demi-humans were being transported through carriage here would mean that, it wasn't going from the Sea of Trees to Empire, but rather it came from the Empire and was heading for another place. In other words, Pal and them went to the Empire to gather some kind of information, hearing the story of

the transportation, they came chasing after it.

The Demi-humans began walking timidly and uneasily as they were told to by Pal and them. When he saw that, Hajime and them also returned to Feruniru. Then, at that time, nearby Hajime, [K~ya!], a cute scream resounded. Arutena appears to have tripped because of the fetters*chains*. While panicking with both hands in the air, immediately, since she was close-----she ended up clinging onto Hajime's back.

In an instant, the Demi-humans turned blue and stiffened up. If the other party were Empire soldiers then, the moment they were used as support, an open palm would come flying. While shouting [Why are you touching me without permission, you dirty beasts!]. That's why, Arutena also thought it would happen? she probably had an illusion that she was going to be hit.

However, Hajime isn't able to do such vulgar things.

[Ahh? ….Jeez]

As Hajime glanced behind his shoulder, he looked at Arutena's hands and feet as she cowered back after their glances aligned, [Well, yeah it would be hard to walk in those], while he convinced himself of that, he scratched his head like it was troublesome and kneeled down before Arutena who was standing. Towards that, the Demi-humans began to make a ruckus as if they were upset.

[Ah, ano….]

[It’s fine so just stay still]

Similarly, Arutena was shaken when he suddenly decided to kneel down, right afterwards, Hajime’s actions caused her to become even more uneasy. That was because Hajime was touching Arutena’s foot. To be accurate, he was touching the fetters, Arutena was shocked and trembling. Never before has a man knelt down and touched her feet before, she became stiff and uneasy as her eyes swam around. Then, in the next instant, her eyes rounded up in surprise. Once she noticed that red magical power was gushing out, without a sound the fetters came off.

When Hajime stood back up, this time he held onto both of Arutena’s hands. At that point, Arutena had understood what Hajime was going to do and managed to regain some composure. And once again the fascinating red radiance gushed out again. A small voice that may or may not have resounded, [How beautiful……], was muttered. Recently, has Hajime’s magical powers been sharpened? It seems to have been much brighter than before.

After removing the handcuffs he immediately threw them away and he finally touched Arutena’s neck. It was because a slave’s collar was attached there. With a serious look and having her neck felt by Hajime, Arutena’s cheeks were heating up for some reason. After Hajime easily removed the collar, [This should be alright now], he convinced himself, and as if nothing happened he turned around.

And, Hajime noticed that strangely he had become the center of attention. The Demi-humans were looking at him as if looking at a mysterious person, Pal and the other Hauria seemed to be proud, Kouki and them seemed to be slightly complex, and Yue and the

females had eyes filled with both amazement and sharpness. While flinching a bit Hajime questioned, [What is it?].

However, against that, the females who noticed Arutena's slightly blushed cheeks reacted.

[[[[[……Nothing (ja*Teio*) (desu*Shia*)]]]]]

It was incredibly cold.

Dere Period? *#2 worst translated chapter*

This is not meant to be a perfect translation, I cannot read japanese characters and this was carefully edited based on translations I got from my Machine Translator. Therefore, there are bound to be errors here and there! At best, this could be considered as an unedited Final Draft towards an Official Translation

After Hajime had unshackled all the demi-humans, they began to explore the airship to satisfy their curiosity, back in the bridge Hajime was listening to Pal and his group's story.

[I see…. the Majinzoku attacked both the Empire and Sea of Trees]

[Affirmative. Though I don't know of the details of the Empire, the Sea of Trees was invaded by a large group of strong demons. It would have been dangerous if not for our previously laid traps]

According to Pal, the Majinzoku also took along an army of demons to the Sea of Trees. [Harutsuina Sea of Trees] its natural since Freed's groups goal is to obtain more Age of Gods magic they would would aim for it, after all it's well known as one of the great labyrinths.

Naturally the soldiers of Fair Bergen*Faea Belgaen in Endo's translation, that's probably the proper way but for my convenience i wont change it* couldn't permit the Majinzoku to just waltz right in, so they gathered the biggest forces they could muster up in order to confront them. They believed that they had the advantage due to the naturally dense fog, but their expectations were easily betrayed and they soon fell into confusion. Apart from the Majinzoku, the demons that they brought along showed their powers to the fullest extent in the Sea of Trees. Even though the demons were not of the insect type, they paved their way through, defeated and took the lives of many soldiers of Fair Bergen one

after another through their odd magic.

The Majinzoku turned around and asked the defeated Demi-humans, similarly to Hajime, [Where is the entrance to the large labyrinth?] However they couldn't just obediently give information to the enemies, they didn't know when the Majinzoku would start advancing towards Fair Bergen to ask random bypassers, so they quickly sent someone back to the town. The council was quickly gathered and a decision was made, the demons were far too strong to defend against, they decided to give them the information. In order to avoid a disaster like in Hajime's case. The labyrinth itself will clear away all who aren't worthy.

However, even though they asked the same question as Hajime, the Majinzoku had a different sense of value for the Demi-humans. No, the Majinzoku didn't do as Hajime did at all, they carried a huge sense of discrimination and hatred against Demi-humans.

They believed that the world belongs to the Majinzoku, and that these beasts that have been abandoned by god is of the utmost humiliation and are absolutely unbearable. Their expressions were that of mad men with absolute confidence in their own god.

And, the Majinzoku bared their fangs at Fair Bergen. They decided to hunt down the Demihumans before going into the dungeon.

The soldiers of Fair Bergen fought back desperately. However, the army of unknown demons were too strong and had no troubles in the Sea of Trees, their chances of winning was low.

As it stood, they would be defeated sooner or later, a soldier of the Kumaninzoku*Bear people* understood this and looked for a chance to escape from Fair Bergen. His purpose was not to run away. His purpose was to beg for help.

His name is Regin*Jin in Endo's translations, again for my convenience i'll keep it like this* Banton. It was the elder which attacked Hajime out of anger and was greatly injured in the process, it was the man that held a deep grudge against the Hauria*Shia's group* tribe.

Now, Regin, without shame nor reputation, went forth to bow down to the Hauria tribe which was banished from Fair Bergen. He ran desperately through the Sea of Trees, his body was covered in wounds, when he finally reached the new village he prostrated himself on the ground many times. He asked them earnestly.

---I need your help, please lend me your power.

The head of the Hauria tribe, Cam, went out and answered the wish.

The reason is not for Fair Bergen. Of course their own species, the Usagininzoku were still in Fair Bergen, but that wasn't the reason either, above all, the thing that Cam could not forgive was the fact that the Majinzoku's purpose was the great labyrinth.

Emergency, if the Majinzoku's do something wierd to the labyrinth…..

When their boss Hajime returns at a later time. He would not be able to look him in the eye if the Majinzoku did something to it.

As a subordinate of Hajime, it would not do if the bosses wish was obstructed by something, in order to have a happy reunion where we can proudly stick out our chests, otherwise we don't have the qualifications to call Hajime, boss! he said.

Though Hajime doesn't really mind such a thing…..it's the pride of the Hauria.

As a result, the Hauria tribe, rather than answering Regins request, [Who dares put their hands on something that belongs to the boss, ahn!? if they want to fight, shall we give them a fight!?] with that in their minds, they decided to participate.

Regin's thoughts later.

[The Hauria were really scary at that time. though they weren't in a frenzy like last time, their lips were waveringly shaking, and splitting abruptly….they were laughing. Uu, it wasn't possible for me to sleep well from that day on. …..The rabbits lips were recalled in my dreams, my neck….Haa~ Haa~……no more. My anxiety doesn't stop. ……Where is the medicine…..]

As the Hauria entered the war, they first decided to wiped out all

demons outside of Fair Bergen. Their purpose was to build strategies by confirming the demons movements and odd magics. Although the Hauria tribe became strong, it was due to using their racial abilities to the fullest, along with the mentality of not running away from fights, their spec's didn't actually increase in any way, shape, or form. Therefore, they didn't recklessly charge in against a new kind of demon they've never fought before.

The other party was a formidable foe, so resolution was needed, preparation of stealth attacks, surprise attacks, lying and deceiving, they did everything to gather information.

And, when the chest board was set up, they all took the offensive at once. Even if the dense fog wasn't effective, the demons were skillfully being killed by the Usaginizoku's original techniques.

Sooner or later the Majinzoku finally started to notice that their demons were disappearing, they ordered a quick regroup. The Hauria that couldn't defeat demons were made to be decoys, Instructions were then given to place traps around their new village.

Then guiding them was simple. anyhow, being baited so easily, the Majinzoku's blood rained down and heads rolled on the ground. Then they appeared and snorted through their nose….it was enough.

After wiping out the Majinzoku, the Hauria suffered some losses as well.

However, their current situation wasn't over yet. Though Fair Bergen was saved by the Hauria, the amount of collateral damage was huge. There was no room to guard the Sea of Trees with all the nursing and funerals that were needed.

Then, at that opening, the Empire soldiers invaded the Sea of Trees.

Their purpose was to abduct Demi-humans.

After the battle was over, the Hauria went back to their village and was late to notice, as a result, there was basically no resistance while kidnaping. When Cam noticed the kidnappings, he kidnaped and questioned an empire soldier, apparently the Empire suffered from a demons attack, it was decided that they needed to secure manpower for repairs, in other words, the Demi-humans(.....)that appeared to be the reason for invading the Sea of Trees.

Cam quickly rushes to the other Usagininzoku villages, but he was too late, most of the women and children have already been kidnaped. It's clear that the powerless Usagininzoku's were not abducted in order to help with the required manpower for the empire. Their purpose was to be used to satisfy their people after receiving an attack.

As expected, the Hauria tribe could not overlook their fellow species, the majority of their forces were left to guard the Sea of Trees, Cam and a small group chased after the Empire soldiers transport wagon that was heading towards the Imperial Capital.

However, communications with Cam was suddenly cut off after they reached the Imperial capital. No one came to the meeting place that was set up ahead of time.

The remaining people at the Sea of Trees became restless and decided to send out scouts towards the empire.

Results, Cam's group that invaded the Imperial capital never came out.

Afterwards, in order to invade the Imperial capital and find out Cam's status, Pal's group was gathering information on the security of the capital when they noticed that there was a transportation wagon with a large amount of Demi-humans leaving for another town, Pal's group then put information gathering on hold and went to rescue their comrades.

[However boss, by any chance, have other places also been attack by Majinzoku?]

[Ahh, they're active behind the scenes here and there? well, luckily I was around and they were all defeated]

If you think about it, Hajime could be considered a God of Plague for the Majinzoku. This is because he doesn't actually hold any hostility towards their race, it just so happens that their timing is bad, so he ends up kicking them out of his way when they obstruct him.

[Well, I have a rough understanding of what's going on. First of all,

you need more information about Cam who's in the Imperial capital?]

[Affirmative. And, though I'm sorry boss…..]

[I understand. We'll be passing by anyways. The fellows that got caught, I'll send them back to the Sea of Trees]

[Thank you!]

Pal and his group all bow at once. Though Shia mumbled a little, nothing was said.

Hajime noticed it and knew what Shia wanted to say, but he waited for her to say it herself, in the end nothing was said.

Finally, Hajime received a message for the leftover forces at the Sea of Trees, then dropped off Riria-na*the Princess* and Pal's group off a little ways away from the Imperial capital. Then his party set a course at full speed towards [Harutsuina Sea of Trees].

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Strangely Arutena was walking especially close to Hajime, he decided to ignore it and keep advancing. Shia who was walking nearby had an anxious face, suddenly her ears reacted with a ~pico pico~. Shia lifted up her face, then began to stare at what lied ahead.

[Hajime-san, there's an armed group up ahead]

The surrounding Demi-humans turned a surprised look towards Shia due to her words. Even the kidnapped Usagininzoku in the group were surprised that Shia had managed to perceive something that they couldn't.

As if confirming Shia's words, a group of Toramimi*Tiger eared* Demi-humans appeared through the fog with weapons. The armed group had fierce eyes and stared at them, then they sensed that there was a large group of Demi-humans in the group, so they decided to not suddenly attack.

Among them, the eyes of the Toraninzoku*Tiger race* who seemed to be the leader, stopped at Hajime. His eyes were then opened wide in astonishment.

[You, that time…..]

Hajime also recalled the Toraninzoku's appearance. His name is Ghil*Gil in Endo's Official translation*, he was the commander of the security force that confronted Hajime the first time he came to

the Sea of Trees. Apparently he survived the invasion and is currently patrolling again.

[What on earth do you want this time…..is that, Arutena!? Are you alright!?]

[Ah, Yes. These people and the Hauria tribe helped me]

Ghil tried to ask Hajime's purpose in a wild voice, and Arutena who was by his side noticed and showed herself. To the words of Arutena, a deep sigh of relief and amazement was heard.

[That's good. Alfrerick-sama was very sad. quickly, please show him your energetic appearance. …….Boy. You, for what reason did you help us Demi-humans? Though it doesn't suit you who is arrogant and haughty…..well, you have my thanks]

[There wasn't a specific reason. it was only a coincidence, a coincidence]

From the atmosphere of meeting an acquaintance, Shizuku's group had doubtful faces. Shia then explained what had happened quietly, also how she fell in love with Hajime, and their faces showed consent.

[Now then, are any of the Hauria tribe stationed at Fair Bergen? or, a fellow that knows where their current village is located?]

[Mu? If its people from the Hauria tribe, there should be several in Fair Bergen. Though you've likely heard, there was an invasion, so many are currently living in Fair Bergen]

[Thats good then. Well, lets quickly head for Fair Bergen]

Hajime says so and urges ahead quickly. With an amazed face again, as usual it seems his attitude hasn't changed much, Ghil ordered his troops to brace their arms in order to guide them back.

There wasn't any feeling hostility like the first time anymore, is it because they were saved by the Hauria tribe which Hajime trained, or is it because there's a great number of people this time…..they were being mature about it and guiding Hajime, though it is convenient that they can get in without any trouble.

At last we've reached Fair Bergen, though it has changed greatly. First of all, the huge dignified gate had collapsed, the leftover remains have yet to be cleaned up.

And, the capital of the Sea of Trees which charmed Hajime with its fantastic beauty of nature, was completely destroyed with remains here and there, the air corridors and waterways made of tree trunks were broken down in places.

[This is awful…..]

Someone muttered.

Hajime totally agreed as well. The cold breeze coming from the darkness and Fair Bergen itself contained a gloomy atmosphere.

Then, people who happened to pass by saw Arutena and their expressions stiffens up, it was unbelieveable, afterwards, they exploded into cheers and ran up to them.

They finally notice that there is a party of humans by their side, when they were told of how Arutena was helped by them their expressions were still stiff, but as they embraced one another exposing their joy, their wariness was relinquished. Of the kidnapped people, there were many that ran at full speed towards their house, after first bowing to Hajime.

The circle that encloses Hajime gradually grows, and the surroundings were completely buried by the people of Fair Bergen as they noticed. After a while the crowd begins to open a pathway. On the other side, stood Alfrerick Haipisuto, the most important person of Fair Bergen.

[Grandfather!]

[Oh, Oh, Arutena! Im glad, you were alright…..]

Arutena, ran at full speed while tears overflowing from her eyes, and jumped into her grandfather's chest. To the reunion of two family members that was thought to never be able to see one another again, many surrounding people were moved to tears.

After embracing one another for a while, Alfrerick later separated from his granddaughter and gently pats her head, then his gaze was turned to Hajime. A wry smile appeared in his expression.

[……Its become a surprising reunion, Hajime Nagumo. Surely, I didn't think that my granddaughter would be saved. Our previous relationship aside*I improvised here, couldn't actually understand it though it has something to do with relationships i think*. …….We sincerely express our gratitude, Thank you]

[I only brought them here. If you wish to thank someone then thank the Hauria tribe. I've heard that there are people from the Hauria tribe here, let me meet with them…..]

[Yes, but it's you who changed the Hauria tribe. What goes around, comes around, you've not only saved my granddaughter, but also, us all. That is the fact. Your kindness is far more than we deserve and we would never be able to repay it all, but, at least accept our gratitude.]

Hajime, from Alfrerick's words, just shrugs his shoulders reluctantly and was scratching his cheek from having been slightly embarrassed.

Yue, Shia, Teio, and Kaori are happy from watching the heartwarming scene. And, the man who dove into the dungeon in order to train and save the human race, to the fact that Hajime has been saving people all around the world, a complex expression was shown on Kouki's face.

Afterwards, Hajime, the Hauria tribe heard of their arrival and are quickly returning to Fair Bergen, we were given permission to wait in Alferick's house.

As to Alferick's order, they were treated to tea(Arutena blushed a great deal when our hands touched while she handed me

tea*Improvised a little here but, it should be alright. There was a word in between hands that i couldn't understand*) When we finished drinking one cup, men and women of the Hauria tribe rushed in noisily.

[Boss!! I haven't seen you in a long time!!]

[We waited for you! Boss!!]

[I, I'm honored to finally meet you desu~! Sir!!]

[Uoi! Newbies! Boss has returned! Tell all the other guys! Get there in 30 seconds!]

[Yes, roger de arimasu~!]

The attitude of the leftover forces, Kouki who should have expected it already from the reaction from Pal's group is completely surprised! He spat out*it was either spat out, or spilled* his tea. While all members were wiping off the tea, they noticed that multiple Usagininzoku were lining up! Standing upright and immoveable with heels in arrangement, it was the appearance of wonderful saluting.

Though there are many who don't actually know Hajime, their behaviours and speech seems to have been trained into them voluntarily, and expanded their powers.

[Un~, Yes, its been a long time. Temporarily, since there are other people here lets stop the saluting]

[[[[[[Sir, Yes, Sir!]]]]]]

With a cheer for the boss that could be heard throughout the Sea of Trees, the Hauria tribe seemed to be very satisfied, to the genuine cheer that they've experienced for the first time [we'll also finally. …..] the Usagininzoku that wasn't part of the Hauria tribe was filled with anticipation.

Surely, after Hajime leaves the Sea of Trees, the angry voice of Sergeant HarOman *thanks, lemonedSM* might have resounded throughout the Sea of Trees.

[I've meet Pal's group and understand roughly what's going on. You guys seem to have played an active role? You've done a great job repelling them]

[[[[[[Yes, We're grateful de arimasu~!!]]]]]]

The last reply was said full of emotion in a tearful voice. Hajime, then passed on Pal's groups information on to the Hauria who are trembling with emotion. In other words, Having found that Cam's group invaded the Imperial castle, they will also invade it. And, there is a request for assistance.

[Indeed. …..The message from "Baltoferd of Certain Death" has definitely been received. We express our thanks, boss]

[.....Na, by the way…..what is your second name?]

[Ha? Me? ……Fu, of course. Like the falling thunder, an unpredictable thunderclap striking down his foes, I am "Iorunikusu of the Thunder Blade" *Yeah, these lines are iffy…it probably sounds out into something, but for the life of me i don't know*! desu~!]

[……Is that so]

It seems that it's already too late for the Hauria tribe.They've been completely infected. I regret that I didn't stop this from spreading beyond Baltoferd of Certain Death.

Hajime pulled himself together and asked "Iorunikusu of the Thunder Blade".

[There seems to have been members outside of the Hauria tribe thats been trained, now, how many exactly?]

[……Rest assured…. Many brave young people from tribes that have good relations to our Hauria tribe have heard of the rumors and begged to be trained….. Our actual combat force goes up to 122 soldiers]

Not only Hajime, but also Yue and Shia were surprised, if thats the case then they've increased their numbers by a fair bit. Hajime's intentions aren't understood so "Iorunikusu of the Thunder Blade" has a doubtful face.

[we can carry all of the members at one time. …..Io, Runikusu. Quickly gather all the guys who want to follow us to the Imperial capital. I want to see everyone together here]

[Ha? Ha! Roger! At once!]

It appeared that "Iorunikusu of the Thunder Blade" didn't understand right away and asked back with a questionable face, then he guessed that it meant that they would be going with Hajime to the Imperial capital, he saluted and immediately left to

gather the other members.

“Io…..of the Thunder Blade, Hajime returned in order to go to the great labyrinth, it appears he didn’t think that Hajime would actually help them. It seems he shaken up by the unexpected words.

And, Io wasn’t the only one who was surprised, Shia who stood next to Hajime was also surprised. Her eyes are open wide, and her rabbit ears are standing up straight! She stares at Hajime.

[Ha, Hajime-san…..the great labyrinth…..]

[You’re worried about Cam’s group right?]

[U….that….sono….but….]

Hajime hit the bulls-eye so Shia shuts her mouth.

Hajime’s purpose is the great labyrinth, Cam’s circumstances are unrelated, Shia was unable to say that she wanted to search for Cam’s whereabouts, entering the Imperial capital which would prove too troublesome. Moreover, Cam wasn’t kidnapped, he went in on his own accord. If anything its his own responsibility.

Shia also decided to follow whatever Hajime’s decisions were. Just like her father had his own path, Shia had hers.

However, still, if you know that your family members whereabouts

are unknown, naturally you would be worried and search. Because of the anxiety being shown on Shia's face - Yue, Hajime, and the rest understood.

Hajime, walks up right beside Shia, who was quiet because she was grateful that extra time would be used, and places his hands on her cheeks.

[Fe?]

To Hajime's sudden action, Shia absentmindedly let out a voice with a confused face. While looking straight into Shia's eyes with persuading power, Hajime smiled and said.

[Shia, that anxious face doesn't suit you. If you're worried about Cam, just say you're worried]

[B, but….]

[No buts. Now, what do you want to do? You've always just said whatever you wanted. What happened to your impudence from our first meeting? To begin with, if you're not smiling….. I wont be able to contain my anger]

[Hajime-san…..]

Though it was snappishly said, it's obvious that he worried about Shia in all truths. The words that Shia yearned for. She understood, Shia places her hand on top of Hajime's hand thats on her cheek. Her eyes began to moisten with joy and love.

[You might not realise this……but this, sono, what. it's enough, that i think that you're important. Therefore, Cheer up…. I won't hesitate to do my best]

[Hajime-san, I…..]

[Just say what you want to say. Because i will definitely listen]

With a gentle warmth transmitting to her cheek, to the eyes that looked straight back into her eyes, Shia's words that she locked up within herself began to spring forth.

[…….I, I'm worried about father desuu~. …..Just one look is fine, I want to see his safe appearance desuu~.]

[Really, you only had to say that in the beginning. Now, did you think i would decline?]

[Wa, I, I didn't mean for it to be like that! Mou, Hajime-san is truly annoying!]

Though she puffs her cheeks as if sulking, stars twinkled brightly in her eyes, her cheeks were dyed pink, and the face of a woman who was looking at her boyfriend was seen. To say it out, happy feelings were overflowing from her whole body.

Shia, though it was not intentional to be reserved with Hajime, due to the increase of women who thinks about Hajime(rivals), She unconsciously held back to increase her ratings.

Everything was blown away at Hajime's words, "You're important."

When this Shia was seen, the women reacts.

[.....N~. Shia, cute]

And, Yue watches Shia heartwarmingly. Just like an older sister.

[I ask of you, I'll be happy if you occasionally abuse me~]

And, Teio gave off an impression that couldn't be anything but perverted. will there be a way to cure her serious illness.

[Uu~, how enviable~]

[well, I would be glad if the man I liked said that to me……]

[Na, Nagumo-kun…..Your very straight forward. I've changed my opinion of you. Suzu is shocked]

[Shia……is enviable, I also towards Hajime……]

The order is Kaori, Shizuku, Suzu, and why Arutena as well.

Then, at last, Shia notices her surroundings, Her face is dyed crimson red and she covers it up with both hands. However, her shame can't hold back her joy, her rabbit ears were waving happily, even her tail was moving according to her joy ~Rifu~.

Then, Io came over at just the right time. It seems that the preparations of the Hauria tribe is finished. It was unreasonably quick.

Alfrerick and Arutena were seeing off Hajime's group as they left on Feruniru*the airship* and flew off towards the Imperial capital.

Imperial Capital *#1 worst translated chapter*

This is not meant to be a perfect translation, I cannot read japanese characters and this was carefully edited based on translations I got from my Machine Translator. Therefore, there are bound to be errors here and there! At best, this could be considered as an unedited Final Draft towards an Official Translation

Miscellaneous.

What kind of place is the capital of the Hoelscher empire? Might(Strength) is the only words you need*Improvised and shortened down*.

If you investigate you'll find the buildings are without affection and are practically placed in a row. Are the streets readjustments of town lots? Is there anything delicious*This line was odd*? There are entrances continuing to the back alley in disorder with big and small things here and there.

The atmosphere as well, there is tension strained everywhere like as if there was recently a disaster, even storekeepers who have opened a street stall serves people far from the idea of a "customer".

However, it was dark and stagnated but never became too much, they were lively with freedom of doing whatever they wanted to do. They had the freedom to do whatever they wanted, their only responsibility were to themselves. This was the creed of the citizens of the imperial capital.

The Hoelscher empire is a new country that an active group of mercenary in a previous great war established, A military nation to which strength speaks for everything. Many of the citizens of the empire are no stranger to fights, to the point that its almost an illness. Theres a huge arena of a colossal size, the kind where there are events done many times throughout the year.

[Oi, you [Doga!!] gupe~!?]

It was Hajime who entered the Imperial capital, naturally Hajime was leading around beautiful women so it was understandable, this process has been repeating many times, before they were done talking they were already kissing the ground. Just now a man with weapons came by and was knocked down while talking and the force caused him to do a triple axel as he fell to the ground.

However, the people do not seem to think much about it. This level of "Fighting" might be an everyday experience for them.

[Uu, though i heard about it already... after all, the empire is unplesant desuu~.]

[Yes, i feel that way as well. ....In a sense its good that we weren't summoned in this place.]

[Well, this is a military nation. Far from firepower being minimal, even the residents, there are many who have combat experience. The bad atmosphere is natural, the fighting is natural. Wanting to live is everyone's desire, mistress.]

Apparently, Shea didn't like the Imperial capital. Though Yue is silent, she also nods in agreement, after all this country isn't liked

by women. Especially for Shia, the things she sees breaks her heart one at a time.

[Shia, don't look so much. ....There's no helping them even if you see.]

[.....Yes, that's right]

What Shia sees are slaves of the demi-human species. The slaves are being bought and sold actively. The empire allows the use of slaves, so business is very prosperous. There are children of the demi-human species turning their gaze to Shia as they were put in their cages with price tags on them, Shia's expression is clouded.

Yue clenches Shia's hand anxiously. Hajime as well, caresses Shia's cheek ~munimuni~ with awkward consideration. The warmth of two people is transmitted to the hand and cheek, and the rabbit ears on Shia's head moved around joyfully.

[.....I cannot permit it. Though we're all living.... the slaves.]

Kouki who was walking behind Hajime was grinding his teeth. He seemed like he would charge right in if left alone.

The influence of the church is strong, even the Hairhi Kingdom has a strong sense of discrimination against demi-humans. The matter of keeping demi-humans as slaves tend to be evaded, because there was no chance of Kouki and them seeing how demi-humans were treated in the castle. Therefore, there might have been extra shock to their minds.

However, it would be bad if he actually charges at them..... Hajime promised in his heart that he would pretend to not know him immediately if such an event happened.

Though, we don't have to worry because we have a reliable person here, the man of the world(Shizuku) is here so we don't have to be worried at all. Now, Kouki is getting fired up while being lectured about this and that. Ryutaro, the muscle for brains fuels it, Suzu casually holds them down. In a sense, they make a good team. Though the team seems to fail quickly if not for the women....

[That's right, wasn't Shizuku proposed to by the Emperor?]

[.....That's right, there was that too]

Shuzuku frowns as she remembers something she didn't want to.

Yue looks at Shuzuku and lets out a sound, [hoo~], with a slight smirk. Shizuku, frowned more at the glance. Kouki has a bitter expression nearby. Apparently, not only the country but also the emperor seemed to be dislikeable.

[About that, Nagumo-kun. Where exactly are we going?]

Shizuku, dodging the women who seemed to want to hear the details at any moment, the talk was redirected to Hajime. Though the story of confirming the safeties of Shia's father was heard, a concrete plan wasn't heard yet.

[N～? the adventurer guild first of all. If the "Gold" rank is used, most information can be found through questioning]

[.....Does Nagumo-kun believe that he's been caught?]

[I don't know. If he has have been caught its possible he's been made into a slave, its also possible that he's just laying low somewhere too. The guards of the Imperial capital is on high alert, but to an abnormal level? To the point where its impossible to go out, entering was a good choice.....]

Hajime was right, and on a level was not an exaggeration to say that it was excessive. An empire soldier was stationed not as patrol on the outer wall and always kept a close watch until a physical checkup was done individually at the entrance gate.

Even in the city, the empire soldiers of a minimum of 3 man teams went glancing around not only in the main streets but also the back alleys. Perhaps it was due to the surprise attack of the demon, that would cause them to get ready for high-level caution even if there wasn't an order yet.

Because the Imperial capital is in such a condition, Pal and them are having trouble with invading, and are waiting for a chance. The Usagininzoku*Rabbit people* who aren't slaves can't just pour on into the imperial capital, and there are limits to pretending to be Hajime's slaves. Therefore, the reinforcement unit that Hajime brought is hiding in a remote rock zone away from the Imperial capital to not attract attention for now. Rather its strange how Cam’s group was able to invade it.

However, Hajime said, [I don't know], its almost certain that Cam

was caught by them already. As for the Usagininzoku,they were a demi-human race of first-rate stealth operations, and Cam continued to polish it. Even if going in and out is severe, he will likely be able to do something by sending a message to the outside by some method. If there are no signs, Its natural to think that

hes been caught already.

Of course, I don't think that the information on Cam can be found at the adventurers guild. However, there might be the case of an event or rumor related to it.

Shia looking uneasy, Hajime extends his hand to caress her cheeks again ~munimuni~. Shia, though she likes when her ears are felt, her cheeks being caressed was also a favorite. Hajime, told a joke to Shia while laughing that left a feeling of uneasiness.

[If hes been caught, we only need to take him back. Don't worry, shia. When the time comes, even if we have to turn the Imperial capital to ashes, we'll get him back.]

[N....leave it to us, shia]

[Hajime-san, Yue-san....]

[nonono, do we have to turn it into ashes? Though your eyes aren't laughing, is it really a joke? is it?]

[Shizuku-yan, the Imperial capital is already.....]

[You've already given up? Have you already given up, Kaori!?]

Was Hajime's joke not really a joke? Though shizuku tsukkomied while her cheek cramped up, she began to panic because Kaori

seemed to be sad and shook her head.

Actually, it seemed too much like a joke, because surely Hajime cannot destroy one whole country.

While Hajime walked on the main street towards the adventurers guild while joking about a joke that actually wasn't, the state of the town began to change. Several buildings were collapsed, and there was debris scattered everywhere.

On the way, according to what they heard through their ears, the demon being managed in the coliseum for a duel, suddenly mutated and became a strong and huge demon which has never been seen before and it raged about. Suddenly the huge demon appeared at the center of the city (it seemed to be 30 meters in length.) the empire reacted afterwards and confronted it.

Finally, the Majinzoku*Devil Race* seems to take advantage and approached the emperor with a dash. While managing the demon by going to the front personally, the emperor was able to repel the Majinzoku somehow....The compensation was large no matter how you looked at the state of the town.

It started at the colosseum which meant that it collapsed radially, at the miserable sight, many demi-human slaves were barefoot and brought out to remove the debris in great number.

Because of the collapse on the other side there were watchmen surveying the intense place, though we need to get to the adventure guild, due to nature, we watched. It reminded me of

how the pyramids were constructed in ancient Egypt, the state of having to carry debris with a gloomy expression while under severe monitoring and abuse from the armed empire soldiers, which put a finished setting to the word misery.

The side effects of the damages in the Imperial capital seems to effect the demi-humans more than anyone else. Even though demi-humans are known for their physical powers, If one is overworked they'll definitely fall down and then someone will appear and beat them until they get back up.

If they don't get back up, the empire would simply attack the Sea of Trees to gain more supply of slaves because they don't see demi-humans as people. Or, the sense of values that strength reigns supreme and only the "weak" are excluded. The purpose of Arutena being transported to another city is also to replace previous slaves.

Just then, a boy around 10 years old with dog ears and tail tripped on some debris and fell down loudly, all the debris contained in his cart also fell out. The inumimi*Dog eared* boy was crouching down enduring the pain of his foot, the empire soldiers of the watch had a dangerous look, he began to approach with a club in hand. It's obvious what he plans on doing.

And, the ally of justice couldn't remain silent about something about to happen right in front of him.

[Oi! Stop....]

Kouki, tries to run out while raising a loud voice to stop the empire

soldier. However, he was stopped by the event that happened in the next moment.

Pashu~!

At the same time as the subtle sound was heard through the air, the empire soldier toppled down like a brick and dove onto the debris.

Gosha! an indescribably miserable sound was heard, the empire soldier who was approaching the inumimi boy didn't move an inch. Apparently he fainted somehow. Afterwards the empire soldiers co-worker came rushing in a hurry, after seeing his condition, he shook his head with an amazed expression and carried him away somewhere. Leaving behind the inumimi boy.

The inumimi boy, just looked with a blank surprised expression for a while as he didn't understand what just happened, He then quickly rakes up all the fallen debris that fell out and resumed his job as if nothing happened.

Kouki who was going to begin running was stunned and baffled. Then, Hajime's voice ranged out.

[Though i don't care if you thrust your neck into something troublesome, at least prevent it from troubling us?]

[N....was that you just now Nagumo-kun?]

Hajime shrugs his shoulder towards Kouki's question. Actually, the empire soldier stumbled and fell because of the needle that was shot out from his artificial arm. Apart from having been helped earlier by me, Kouki, frowned at the word "troublesome". Apparently, i've seemed to flip on his justice switch.

[What is troublesome. ....Is it bad to help? Even you helped me]

[If anything, stopping you from making a scene is the correct choice. If you went and stopped him more empire soldiers would have shown up and it would have become a riot. We came here to look for a person. Not to cause extra commotion. Can you not cause an unnecessary uproar, if you're going to cause one at least do it away from us so it won't be a nuisance]

While giving an indifferent answer while waving his hand, Kouki heats up and sends their purpose of finding Shia's dad into the corner of his mind, He began to appeal for the sense of values of his ethics and justice.

[You, as your watching the demi-humans, do you think of it as nothing at all! Look, now, at this time, they are suffering!]

[Haa~, hey Yaegashi*Shizuku*, quickly do something about this fool whos lost sight of our purpose. I'm leaving it in your care]

Hajime also, Myuu was helped before. If a child suffers in front of his presence, he feels nothing at all*In case you guys are confused, this is because he got to know Myuu, so she wasn't a "random" child*. Be an adult....do something about it yourself, think what you want.

However, even after the original purpose was said, i can't work on the emancipation of slaves, so i left it to Yaegashi because its troublesome to play with Kouki.

Shizuku, though a sigh was let out....ahead of that, Kouki raised his voice in anger. Apparently, he seems to not like that Hajime had relied on Shizuku for this incident.

[Shizuku has nothing to do with this! Right now, im talking with you! You value Shia, so why are you deserting these demi-humans!]

As Kouki's voice became loud, people in the surroundings began to pay attention. Some of the remote empire soldiers and watchdogs began to glance towards Hajime frequently.

Since Hajime is an outsider and is looking for Cam who is currently hostile with the empire, he didn't want to stir up anymore unnecessary trouble with the authorities. Therefore, he rolled his eyes abruptly towards Kouki.

[.....Amanogawa*Kouki*. I'll say it one more time for you who has bad memory. Alright? i don't want to hear your repetitious complaining, and i don't plan on having a debate on ethics or sense of justice. I don't recognize you as companions, so i don't intend to get along with you. After all you asked for "permission" and "followed" along. Therefore, don't rush in by yourself,

its unsightful. If you make too much noise.....should I crush your limbs and send you back to the Kingdom?]

[Kh.....]

[I said it a while ago, but i don't intend to interfere with you either. Therefore, while your still in range don't do anything that will trouble us. We came here to look for Cam. There is no time to be distracted on other things. .....And Shia is more important than other demi-humans to me]

Hajime, turned away from Kouki's glare, as if uninterested.

Slavery, its completely natural in this world. Though they're certainly receiving cruel treatment, it's "bad" to help a demi-human thats been enslaved in general. Because it counts as stealing another persons "possession".

"Still" it's probably necessary to think about it eventually. The resolution to fight against the empire itself to create a method of abolishing the slavery of the demi-humans. As it is, even if we help the slaves with force, there's a threat of retaliation and the demi-humans would be captured and treated more harshly than ever before.

Does he finally understand, if not..... Kouki stares at the back of Hajime and doesn't move. Still being urged by shizuku and them, he finally let it go reluctantly.

Kouki, though he's accompanying Hajime with permission, if what Hajime said about gods were true and others as strong as Nointo*White haired angel that Kaori is currently using as her body* will be appearing more often, then he has to obey, because it would be too difficult to obtain power otherwise.

To be able to obtain the Age of Gods magic by obeying Hajime was certainly the best choice. Therefore, he held back the ill feelings in his chest and became silent.

With the delicate atmosphere(only Kouki's group) they reached the adventurers guild at last.

There are tables put in the large space for miscellaneous things, and two counters. One counter for the procedures and receptionist, who was also a woman, while the other counter was a bar. There are fellows drinking in the daytime here and there, if there wasn't, i felt like tsukkomi-ing to help with its revival.

When Hajime set foot inside, due to his familiar encounters he understood. In other words, vulgar glances would be placed on Yue and them. Therefore, Hajime while moving towards the counter used "Pressure" as soon as he stepped in.

As expected of a military nation, even as they drank there was no one who fainted, they began to expose caution and sobered up all together.

The receptionist at the counter, there's no radiance from her as seen in the other towns. Only looking down on Hajime with an expression of no motivation. I get the feeling that i should state my business quickly.

[I want information. Recently, was there any demi-humans which caused a commotion here in the Imperial capital a few days ago?]

[.....]

To Hajime's question, the receptionist gives Hajime a suspicious look. This is because the content of the question was strange.

You only have to go to the slave association of the merchant guild if you wanted information of a slave, even then slaves cannot cause a commotion in the Imperial capital. That is because a slave's collar seals off most of the resistance. And, Hajime's question does not change, what he's asking is something impossible in the Imperial capital unless they weren't a slave.

Result, the receptionist pointed towards the bar counter, whether its a regular system or it became too troublesome to deal with.

[.....Such information can be heard there]

As Hajime looks towards the counter, he sees the figure of a man past middle age, polishing glass, apparently the bar also counted as a place for information gathering. The receptionist returned to doing what she was before, as if declaring that her work is done.

Hajime shrugs his shoulder and walks towards the bar counter.

There are dangerous glares appearing from the adventurers, Kouki and Ryutaro also react and glare back. Suzu seemed to be weak in these cases and shrinks back behind Shizuku. Holding the hem of Shizuku's clothes, she looked cute for a moment.

Hajime goes up to the counter and asks the same question to the bartender. However, the other party just kept polishing glass while disregarding it. Hajime's eyes narrowed.

Then,

[This here is a bar, Not a place for children to come and play around. I don't plan on having anything to do with people who can't drink. Leave quickly]

so he's looking for a drinking master*these 2 sentences are weird to me, i don't know what Tenpuremasuta is, though i understand its a refference to something*. Then I'll give him a drinking master! Hajime's tension began to increase. He's still just polishing glass to make it shiny, but he values his reputation. If you come here, and the liquor is drunk in great loads, he'll definitely be delighted.

Hajime, places money on the counter with an poker face while secretly being happy about being able to taste a fantasy game hero's feelings. From the darkness in the corner of his mind, a mini-Hajime asked, [You called?], peeping out.

[That's true. Master, I ask for the strongest and worst quality liquor you have in this shop]

[.....If you vomit, i'll kick you out]

The master, the moment Hajime ordered, reluctantly pulled out a

bottle from the shelf behind him and his eyebrow twitched slightly as he placed it on the counter with a pikui~ sound.

Adventurers were all staring at Hajime because they felt cautious that he wasn't just a kid, they understood due to the pressure he released.

Hajime picks up the bottle and abruptly cuts the tip off with his finger tips. The action itself was fluid and people who understood held their breath. Even the master's eyes were widening a little.

A strong alcoholic smell drifts from the bottle as soon as it was open, Shia and Kaori who was by his side instinctively covered their nose due to the fumes. Kouki and them also backs away while groaning "Uu".

[hey, Nagumo-kun? So, do you have to drink that? Shouldn't you stop?]

[yes, that's right. you'll absolutely vomit. Suzu already seems to want to vomit]

[In the first place Hajime, lets have it be a better liquor if your going to drink it anyways]

[Its as Kaori says, Hajime. Why did you purposely ask for that one.....]

Shizuku and them relay their complaints without restraint. Yue by his side pulls the hem of his clothes while frowning from the smell of the liquor.

[No, its bad manners to not taste liquor thats open.... are you looking down on the liquor?]

Hajime replies as they're worrying.

A smile slightly appeared on the mouth of the master from the joke. Hajime thought, I got the master to smile! There must not be a lot of adventurers who respect the taste of liquor very often.

Hajime, [ah~] Kaori and the rest let out a voice as Hajime began drinking the liquor with horrible smell. Rather than pouring it into a cup he's drinking it directly. Hajime's mind seems to be calm but deep within, "*same problem as above for this sentence*see i am a drinking master, i've definitely lived up to your expectations." As the mini-Hajime explains in the mind, his left arm begins to ache.

Only the sound of [gokyu~ gokyu~] was heard echoing within the store from his throat. And, in no time at all the whole bottle was drunk up in one go.

An empty bottle was held in Hajimes hand! When he puts it on the counter, the master looked at him while having a smile on his lips. Hajime's eyes conveyed [Any complaints?] towards the master.

[.....I get it, i get it. You are definitely a customer]

The master put up both hands and showed will of surrendering while smiling wryly. Its quite bitter sweet. Hajime's, "act with a master to gather information was finished" with that he was content with the outcome.

The liquor that Hajime drank was said to be 95 percent alcohol. [could it even be called a drink anymore?] the level of its quality was the worst as well. Its the feeling being treated to free alcohol.

They needed to prove themselves that they weren't just kids in order to get the master to have a different opinion of them.

By the way, Hajime has a constitution which will never get drunk no matter how much he drinks. The reason is because of "Poison Tolerance." Originally the delicious way of drinking liquor was instilled to him by his father while in Japan, though it was one of his best memories, its become impossible for him to get drunk completely because of "poison tolerance", so Hajime regretted for a moment.

[.....De? Is there any information on my question a little while ago? Of course I will pay a suitable value for it]

[No, I don't mind the same amount as the drinking money a while ago. .....You wanted to hear about the Hauria Usagininzoku right?]

[! .....There seems to be some information. Give me the details]

Apparently, the master actually had suitable information on the matter.

There seemed to have been a huge arrest several days ago, that time there was a group of Usagininzoku who tried to escape the empire soldiers through force. However, it wasn't possible and they were soon completely surrounded by over 100 empire soldiers, It appears that they were taken to the castle when caught.

Still, the ability to overturn the common sense of the Usagininzoku was an excellent topic, due to the unusualness of the topic there was actually a lot of information throughout the town.

[Hee~, the castle.....]

When Hajime sees Shia by his side muttering, he notices that her complexion has become cloudy. Really, what kind of treatment will a demi-human receive if they invade the Imperial capital....at the very least we can't expect a bright future.

However, the place he was taken makes me anxious. Though there's also demand for male Usagininzoku, but males of middle age like Cam doesn't have very high demand. Moreover, the existence of these excessive empire soldiers practically showing off their power. It would be natural if he was executed immediately on the spot.

In other words, the empire finds some value in Cam, they've decided to make the best use of him. The possibility of Cam being alive is still very high. It's still too early to give up hope.

Hajime clenches Shia's hand under the counter in order to reassure her. Yue also does the same for her other hand. Hajime and Yue's

feelings were transmitted to Shia, power returned to her eyes and she nodded.

The master looks at Shia's hair-color which is rare for demi-humans. The relation of the Usagininzoku that was caught could be guessed. Hajime suddenly asked an unexpected question to the master in a light tone.

[Master, if i paid the price, the Imperial castle, would you give me information on it?]

[! .....Though your question sounds like a joke.....It doesn't seem like a joke when i look at your appearance....]

Though Hajime was smiling, the eyes that looked straight at the master wasn't laughing at all.

Due to the strange pressure, even masters expression stiffened up a little. The content of the question is tricky as well, If answered unskillfully, the intention of aiding a rebellion will appear.

Mostly, because the adventurers guild is an independent organization, so there is no actual reason to have a "rebellion" in the empire. Hajime, having based his assumption of this, asked his question and put the master in a bind.

However, though the master is someone that belongs to the adventurers guild, it's also his home country, if it's known that he sold information on the castles stronghold, he wont get away scott free, therefore he cannot easily pass on that information. Because

Hajime was starting to understand what the master was thinking he started applying pressure which caused the master to hesitate even more.

So, the master finally decided on telling Hajime of someone else who knew of the information to his question.

[.....There is a man by the name of Nedeiru in the fourth unit of the patrol group. He's a former jailer]

[Nedeiru. Alright, i'll visit him. We're indebted to you, master]

Because Hajime didn't think that master would tell information about the imperial castle to him, the next best thing would be telling him of someone else who knew.

Hajime left the adventurers guild and walked out onto the main street. Meanwhile, Shia asked Hajime about the exchanges from a while ago.

[Ano, Hajime-san. Being introduced to a former jailer person a little while ago, by any chance....]

[Ah. In order to hear about the details of the place, i intend to invade it tonight. Now then, Yue and I will go and collect information, you guys go off and eat a meal at a suitable place. We'll be back in two or three hours]

Shia's face changed to doubt after hearing Hajime's instructions.

[? Why is it only you two? ....Ha!? Surely, your not just trying to get some time alone with Yue!? Always! Always!!]

[Na!? Is that so Hajime-san!? No, that's no good! Just what are you thinking in this situation!]

[Mu? Its always only Yue~. ....hey, husband. May i participate in the battle too?]

[Th, there's no way that would happen! How are we going to do that with the amount of people here. I'm not a guy who can't read the air]

With the suspicion of Shia and Kaori who sensitively reacts to it, and, to Teio that demands a 3P, Hajime instinctively threw out a tsukkomi.

Kui~Kui~ Hajime's sleeve was pulled. It was Yue with blushed cheeks glancing upwards at Hajime.

[.....We're doing it outside?]

[No, because we're not doing it]

[.....Then, we're doing it indoors?]

[No, its not a problem of where we do it. Please just leave it there]

[.....Muu, i understand. I'll prepare for the battle at night]

[The battle at night, you're talking about the invasion of the Imperial castle right? that's what you mean right?]

Yue's joke is clear. .....It must be a joke. Though her eyes had a sharpness to them which resembles a wild wolf about to prance on its prey with a bewitching atmosphere.

On the other hand, Shizuku who had been watching the exchanges of Hajime was considerably confused.

[O, How mature! It should be a conversation between classmates, but its a mature topic *slightly improvised*, what do we do Shizuku!]

[....Afterall what can i do. ....But, Kaori still? .....What should i do? should I be supporting my best friend here? Or should I scold them while its not too late? ....I don't understand. The level of the conversation is too high for me!]

With Suzu who was blushing and hiding herself behind Shizuku while squirming to keep the ero inside, and Shizuku was muttering things, [Are you Okan ka!*Probably a refference to something*] I tsukkomied. The hero was blushing slightly and the muscle for brains and passbyers A-B-C- through Z was affected by Yue's bewitching atmosphere.

[You guys stop it already.....The reason why its just Yue and me is because if Nedeiru isn't obedient, a politer "talk" will be needed, Yue who's accustomed to Reproduction magic will be useful.....]

[Even i can use Reproduction magic.....]

[Kaori, you should leave it to Yue this time.]

[Shizuku-yan.....]

Nedeiru was a soldier of the Empire, he wouldn't obediently give information about the Imperial castle. In other words "Force" will be used through questioning. And, Reprodction magic would be useful in order to use "Force" properly, its too severe for Kaori, Shizuku who guessed Hajime's intentions calms Kaori down.

Kaori also, she had guessed Hajime's intentions, "still" she wanted to be with him, she also wanted be of help to Shia, but because she understands that the soldier will likely not give information unless force was used she withdrew reluctantly.

Every member consented and while Hajime and Yue started disappearing into the crowd, Shia shouts out.

[Hajime-san! Yue-san! Ehtto, sono.....]

She doesn't appear to have the right words yet, a troubled smile appears on Hajime's face when he saw that Shia was stumbling with words. Surely, It was the same serious atmosphere she has in the labyrinths.

After all, Shia said the words with a smile and slightly embarrassed to Hajime.

[Keep H to a moderate level!]

[Its ruined! This damned rabbit!]

After Hajime shouted back, he grabbed Yue's hand and disappeared into the crowd.

Several hours later, they returned to where Shia and the group was on standby, Yue was strangely glossy and Hajime was haggard.

What exactly did they find out.....

Don’t Fret, It’s the Hauria

This is not meant to be a perfect translation, I cannot read japanese characters and this was carefully edited based on translations I got from my Machine Translator. Therefore, there are bound to be errors here and there! At best, this could be considered as an unedited Final Draft towards an Official Translation

Imperial Capital of the Hoelscher Empire. In the corner of the restaurant on the first floor of the Inn, cold air flowed slightly.

Sitting down at the table where the cold air was being generated, was of course Hajime’s group. After Hajime and Yue returned from gathering information, the females glared cold gazes at Hajime.

Especially, Shia and Kaori’s eyes which were lacking all light, honestly, it was enough to make Hajime feel terror. Just behind Kaori, a Hannya*you know, that demon with the mask and long hair* started becoming visible.

[You seem to have had a great time?]

[Yue, is very glossy? What were you doing? Nee? What did you do? Nee, Nee]

There were no intonations in the voices from the two, the people from the next table couldn’t endure any longer and also quickly left. Judging from the appearance of the two people, It wasn’t possible to intervene at all, the waitress could only give Hajime a troubled look from afar.

The reason why this happened, was naturally, due to Yue being strangely glossy after returning, also because Hajime looked slightly haggard as well.

In other words, although they went out to gather information, what else could the 2 have done other than that! Their anger was building up

[……You've misunderstood. Yue is glossy because she sucked my blood?]

[[N?]]

both of them were misunderstanding Hajime's situation and were shocked when the truth was told. Due to unexpected answer, both of their faces became identically goofy looking.

[Did you guys really think I'd place my hands on Yue? Am I a dog in heat. Is that what you guys think? Eh?]

[Ah, ahahahahaha, of course not~, I knew it right away. I thought that would be the case. Ne, Nee, Kaori-san]

[Ye, yes! Of course, Shia. The amount of mana consumption from using Reproduction magic is harsh. I thought it was that from the beginning]

Hajime only had a sarcastic look in his eyes, Shia and Kaori's eyes swam around all over the place while trying to defend themselves.

Hajime, suddenly turns his sights to Shizuku's group. They immediately looked the other way while beginning to blush. It

appears that they also misunderstood completely.

[Ha~a, oh well. Anyways, we got the information that we needed. Tonight, we'll sneak into the palace where Cam and the others are most likely being held. Though security seems to be quite severe, as long as Cam's group is found, we can quickly escape using space magic, so it shouldn't be that difficult. Only Yue, Shia, and I will be infiltrating. Just in case, since you guys can't use sign perception and teleport. You guys should meet up with Pal's group outside of the capital. Because we'll transfer directly there]

[.....We understand……in the first place, is the information is correct? Isn't it possible that this Nedeiru guy lied……]

[Thats probably not possible. After having his crotch flattened, then regenerating it before he loses consciousness, moreover it was actually crushed….a mans treasure, many times, repeatedly. Its just not possible for a man to endure it…..after we got him to spill out the information, Nedeiru was already shedding tears of relief while holding his hands over his crotch, even I could feel his pain]

Your the one that did it! is what Kouki and them really wanted to Tsukkomi, though they stopped and sighed instead because Hajime was unnaturally showing a sad expression. Shizuku's thoughts, after having felt chills, it's a relief that Kaori didn't go.

At the same time, Yue who grounded up and crushed the man's crotch many times, thought nothing of it at all, it wouldn't be odd for them to both be referred to as the "ball smashers" throughout the Empire, Kouki and Ryutaro while shivering, swore to never defy Yue. Their inner thighs became somewhat uncomfortable under the table.

[Na~a, Nagumo……right now, if Shia's family is in the Imperial

castle, shouldn't you just ask for them back? Riri should be there too, I'm a hero as well…..I think we should manage if we just talk it out…..]

Kouki said, completely late with all the efforts that have already been put in.

Certainly, its as Kouki said, with Kouki's words as a hero, an appointment for Riria-na could be set up in order to ask for help. Rather than relying just on Hajime's raw power, negotiations was also a choice.

However,

[And what do they get out of it?]

[Eh?]

[Cam's group are invaders, what if they've already killed Empire soldiers? Moreover, although they completely surrounded the Usagininzoku, Cam's group became a completely different existence to them because they dealt damage to the Empire. Do you really think that they'd just hand them over for free?]

[That…..]

[They'll definitely want some sort of compensation. They'll definitely take complete advantage over it, there's too much risks. Also consider how they intend to save face as well. Even if they get freed it won't be over for them. Or, it will likely affect the princess who has to deal with the negotiations. Are you still fine with that?]

The possibility certainly exists, Kouki just kept quiet. Perhaps, he also wanted somehow help with the situation. There was that thing with the Demi-human slave a while back too, he couldn't ignore it and now continued to think about something.

~Hijiyo~ Hajime started to feel a bad premonition, he looked at Shizuku for an instant. And Shizuku said [Ah, this, this is bad] she noticed Kouki's expression. Apparently there are signs are recklessness appearing from Kouki.

Hajime's thoughts, though i never thought it would happen, when we invaded the Imperial capital, Kouki suddenly required "Huge Care" for his actions, I need to take the first move.

[Naa, Amanogawa. I have a request for you…..]

[Tsu!!!? wh….what? a request from Nagumo? …..Impossible…..]

Kouki stiffens up and becomes flabbergasted from the word, request, that Hajime suddenly said. Ryutaro and Suzu also did the same thing. Its as if they had discovered a UMA*Alien* in town by chance. A "request" from Hajime, judging from how he usually is, that word should have been impossible.

However, Hajime had expected that kind of reaction, though he was a little irritated, he didn't voice it out.

[Ah~, never mind, it's fine after all. I can't ask you to do such a dangerous thing. Sorry, forget about it]

[wa, wait, wait a second! First tell me what you want me to do…..]

He started to feel bad due to the atmosphere when Hajime was so quick to give up, Kouki easily took the bait.

[Nothing much, although i'll be invading the Imperial castle, security is too tight. That's why I want you to be a decoy to raise the success rate even by a little bit. ….For example, a person that is willing to rage and attract the Empire soldiers for the sake of helping the Demi-humans, like the inumimi boy from a while ago…. something along those lines. Ah, however, its too dangerous. Please forget about it]

Of course, there's no reason why Hajime wouldn't be able to invade the castle even if security was strict. Although, a decoy would be helpful, its not particularly necessary. simply, there was no other way but this. It would be bad if he went and did something reckless by himself, so i decided to give him a task to do. At the very least, it'll actually help! So that he doesn't try to say that he's coming along to the Imperial castle…..

[Decoy….those children…..do it. I'll do it! Nagumo! Please let me be the decoy!]

[O, oh, really, I understand, indeed, you are a hero…..alright. To such a wonderful hero, I'll give you this]

After saying so, Hajime pulls out some ores from his "Treasure Warehouse" and transmuted them into four masks.

The masks are divided by color, red, blue, yellow, and pink, its a full-faced helmet which makes you think about the heros of a certain crew. It was an ingenious design that didn't obstruct breathing or sight. An average Synergist wouldn't be able to create it at all. It was a useless skill that had been refined in vain without waste.

[.....Nagumo…..that's?]

[As you can see, a mask]

[.....Why?]

[Why you say, is it alright to have a hero raging around in the Imperial capital? Your identity would be known. Therefore, the mask's purpose is to hide your identity. In every country, the hero's identity must never be known. It begins with a masked hero, and it ends with a masked hero. I even color coated it so that you guys could tell each other apart]

[Eh? No, suddenly, with that kind of reasoning…..well, As for our true identities, we should definitely conceal it. We'll probably trouble Riri if found out….but, this……]

Kouki looks at the masks with a cramped cheek.

[.....Don't worry about it hero(laughs). To you, the tidy leader, I'll give you "Red"]

[.....Naa, just now, did you attach something at the end of hero?]

[Sakagami*Ryutaro*, you're blue. Blue shows a calm disposition. Though I hesitated to create a black and make you it instead, my judgement for you(Muscle for Brains) was that blue would be best. I think it was a good decision if I do say so myself]

[O, oh? Though I don't really understand, you're giving it to me]

[And Taniguchi*Suzu*, you…..]

[P, pink right? right? I'm a little embarrassed……]

[You're yellow. Eh? did you hear? You're yellow. You're easily happy, so your Yellow. In various meanings, you're Yellow]

[…..Nee, Nagumo-kun, by any chance do you hate Suzu*she refers to herself this way if you guys haven't caught on yet*? That kind of thing?]

[And the last one is…..Yaegashi*Shizuku*……]

[Please wait, Nagumo-kun. Though there's only one remaining….but it can't be right?]

[Yaegashi, of course, the remaining pink, it's yours]

[I don't want it! In the first place, Isn't there other ways to hide a person's identity rather than wearing masks? It should be fine if I just cover up myself with a cloth! Nagumo-kun, you, truthfully you're only doing it for fun right!]

To Shizuku's protest, Hajime feeling relieved, shrugs his shoulders. Shizuku's cheeks have cramped up and are twitching because his attitude was unreasonable like a childs.

[Alright? Surely you can hide your identity! But. The mask fits on comfortably, it won't fall off easily, and it's shock absorbent. In addition, it's so light you won't even notice its on, and its endurance is so high that average attacks wouldn't even scratch it]

[All, all those things in a single moment……what uselessly high skills……]

[And Yaegashi, you're the cool beauty type and usually well

defined, but in truth, you actually like cute things, its a classic. Therefore, I purposely and thoughtfully made you pink even if you said no. Show some gratitude]

[J, Just what are you assuming….wa, cute things, I, I don't particularly…..]

[Ah, you're right, Hajime-kun! Shizuku's room is filled with stuffed animals]

While Shizuku was desperately trying to deny Hajime's assumption, a betrayal emerged. Kaori exposed Shizuku's hobbies. On Shizuku's head, "!?", mark appeared.

[……..Thinking about it, she always loved animals back in the days. Especially, rabbits and cats.]

[!]

[Ah, the standby photo on Shizuku's phone was also a bunny rabbit ne~]

[!]

[Whenever we pass by the arcade, she always makes sure to play the UFO catcher game. Moreover, it's usually delicious*is this line supposed to be about her face while playing the game or something?*.]

[!]

[I see, and Shizuku-san would always stare and look at my Usamimi*Rabbit ears*.]

[! ! !]

[…..Yaegashi. Sa~a, take it. Pink….is yours]

Hajime was quietly holding out the pink mask with gentle eyes. For some reason, all other members also, watched her with a gentle expression. Before anyone was aware, the choice to not wear a mask, disappeared.

[.....What's up with this, this air……though you guys say that, I, though I don't really like pink, but? I'll reluctantly take it, but don't misunderstand about this alright? Also, is there any person out there that doesn't like small animals? That's why, this time only, there's no other reason….so, stop looking at me with those gentle looking eyes!]

Even as her ears were reddening, Shizuku honestly received the mask.

While trying to deny it desperately and embarrassingly, Shia quietly said, [If it's Shizuku-san, do you want to touch my Usamimi a little?] an empty effort that destroyed the dere aspect of friendship.

By the way, After Hajime finished pushing the 4 to their positions, he was snarling.

The plan was, if 4 people wearing masks suddenly appear and make a huge commotion in town, their names would exceed the 2 names that the Hauria game to him.

In reality, during the time where he was talking with Pal's group, it

seems that he held a grudge against them for laughing at the names he was called by. Moreover, because their color coated, they won't be called by their names directly, it'll be enough agony to make them want to conceal themselves up in a mountain…..

While thinking about how to stop Kouki's recklessness, the intentions to scheme his revenge also appeared, Yue had a look that was slightly amazed.

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Midnight.

There were innumerable rooms fitted with grates and not one light in the darkness existed. The grates were made from special metals, it formed a solid barrier and there were carved magic formations on the ground, as if declaring in silence that they'll never let the people in the small rooms escape.

There was a nasty smell generated from the filth and blood, it was extremely dirty, even if they couldn't see properly they could tell.

What is this terrible place, Of course, it was the prison which was purposed to restraining prisoners, it was also considered as the dungeon in the castle of the Hoelscher Empire.

As expected, a jail worthy of the Imperial castle, the quality of the metal ore that was used to create the dungeon was certainly
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excellent, the magic formations carved on the ground in order to not let any prisoners escape was also excellent.

Any person that attempts to break out, or anyone sneaking in will definitely die, there were also traps engraved onto the walls that seemed to be extremely painful when tripped, but, as long as the aria that releases the trap is not recited properly it'll be fine, though in the first place, arbitrary actions might have been predicted and sealed off already.

With that, there is no possibility of being able to break into the prison, while being tormented by the putrid smell without even one light, if someone is placed in a cell, an ordinary man would go insane in just a day. Guards are situated in front of the only door leading down from the outside, their replacement schedules are much longer during the night time.

However, despite being one of the worst places, now, for some reason there were many voices heard.

[Oi, how many did you break today?]

[All his fingers, and 2 ribs….You?]

[Hehe, it's my win. All his fingers and 3 ribs I believe?]

[Ha, only to that extent? I broke 7 ribs and his cheekbones…..and also one of his Usamimi's]

[Are you serious? Just what did you do? Though they don't really care how we beat them, they specifically said not to put our hands on their Usamimi's….]

[Na~Ni*What*, it's just the usual, who's the person that you're

working for? because, he never answered my question properly. …..Then he said. “It’s your mother. I’m your new father, so I came to check up on my son.”]

[Uwaa~, I guess, anyone would lose their temper over that….]

[But, those fellows, their Usamimi’s aren’t dropping down at all, maybe they’ve received orders? it might be something like disobeying us**Improvised this line, couldn’t get its true meaning*…..]

[Ah~, they’ll definitely be disposed of. Kekeke, I can’t get enough of this stuff~!]

When I heard them, they were boasting of who inflicted the most damage. Though they didn’t die because the minimum amount of recovery magic was used, to have the courage to talk about it in the middle of the room, the owners of the voices state that their prisoners are all covered in wounds.

Still holding it in and enduring it, the identities of those being joked about was, the Hauria that were caught by the Empire.

They, competing who dealt the most injuries, weren’t particularly out of order. As they’ve already prepared themselves for it.

Since being placed into the dungeon in the castle, they already expect not to live anymore. Were they to be executed, or turned into slaves…..It seems to have been the latter case, because they’ll likely try to commit suicide when an opening shows, as expected, they have no will to live. As they would only be forced to fight against their own family, it would only be a nightmare, so they’ve resolved themselves beforehand.

And, they don't have any power because, they intend to go out with a bang.

The Empire, because the Hauria's abilities are too far apart from common sense, they're suspecting that someone is plotting something behind them.

Moreover, even if that wasn't true, his Majesty the Emperor likes the Hauria tribe, he seems to want to use them as pawns for his empire army. Battle operations, able to use weapons, and fighting spirit, a method of changing the gentle Hauria, the Hauria tribe was like a treasure box for his Majesty which liked strong people.

The Hauria who suspects as much, until their lives were finally extinguished, will continue to defy the empire. Because their resolutions were already made, it was foolish to waste time torturing them.

By the way, being put in this dungeon covered with wounds, they're still tortured in the name of questioning in their cells, The hauria tribe still showed a confident smile, most of the empire soldiers that saw their confidence showed fear in their eyes.

[This time, the chief was quite grand as well…..]

[Thats right. ……Naa, while we have the chance, want to have a competition with the chief to see who can handle the most injuries?]

[Oh? Sounds good. Then, my Usamimi's would be complete]

[No, you, it'll be a great loss right?]

[No, the chief is starting to sound more and more like boss. ……especially when training recruits…..]

[Ah, just as if the boss was possessed huh. When being verbally abused like that…..its impossible…..]

[Ma~a, if the boss was caught in the first place, normally he'll try to destroy everything from the inside even when caught!]

[Rather, don't you get the feeling that the Imperial capital is crying? surely, disappearing from the map.]

[Boss is relentless afterall!]

[Because he's an ogre!]

[No, he's the Devil!]

[Then, looks like he's the Demon Lord]

[Oi, oi, doesn't that make him sound like the lord of Majinzoku's. Compared with the boss, the Demon Lord is an insect that can't even compare. An insect]

[Then……the most devilish inspired malevolent god?]

[[[[[[[[[Thats it!]]]]]]]]]

[……You guys are fairly energetic? This "Beep" guy……It's been a long time but it seems you guys have gotten much more talkative? Eh~?]

[[[[[[[[[…….]]]]]]]]]

The voice that was filled with anger that affected the Hauria sounded out from the dark.

It was a very familiar voice, the Hauria fell silent and froze. Inside the darkness, their breaths became shallow as if they were small

animals waiting for a carnivore to pass by.

[Oi, Kora. Why are you guys falling silent for. I'm the Ogre, demon, Satan, malevolent god? right?]

[Hahaha, hey, guys. I, it seems like I've finally made it to that point. ……I've begun hearing hallucinations at last……]

[Feel relieved, you're not the only one. …..I'm the same]

[Is that so……you guys too……but that last voice sounded like bosses angry voice……]

[At least allow us to hear the voice of a cute woman before our end]

The voice from the other party that wasn't there should have been properly heard, but the Hauria treats it as a hallucination in order to escape reality.

To such people, Hajime the owner of the voice, pointed out the reality. Yue that was nearby pulls out a sphere of light, the darkness in the dungeon was completely wiped out. And, the appearance of Hajime was clearly seen inside the Imperial castle.

[[[[[[[[[Gee, boss------!!?]]]]]]]]]

[Quiet down you idiots]

[……You look energetic?]

[Looks and feels like it, though we're in pretty bad shape……our worries have faded away though.]

Everyone of the Hauria tribe, while suffering from a extremely cruel injuries, being kept in a dirty prison, though they're not in the state to stand up, their wild voices raised as if meeting their own clones.

Hajime, Yue, and Shia, the Hauria were amazed.

[Wh, why, is the boss at such a place…..]

[Save the talk for later. First of all, we've come to rescue you guys. ……Jeez, although you guys are in tatters up you're quite spirited. Just how tough are you guys]

[Wa, wawa, obviously, its because we were trained by boss]

[Compared to our training with boss, being tortured by the empire soldiers is practically like playing a game]

[It's like their thirst for blood wasn't enough? It was too lukewarm, they were even considerate enough to nurse us]

[Ma~a, bosses thirst for blood, is on the level of where in just one moment there is an illusion of being killed in hundreds of different ways, there's no helping it]

While coughing ~Gefug Gefuu~ and blood, towards the words that the Hauria were joking around with, an indescribable gaze came from Yue and Hajime, looking at Shia.

When that happened she coughed ~Gohon~ to try and deceive Hajime, the traps in the dungeon were confirmed by the Magic Eye, it was then conveyed to Yue and Shia. And, dismantling the traps quickly began.

The magic trap formations, usually, without the correct aria(Key) it cannot be released. But it was being neutralized through the process of dispersing the magic put into the magic formation by operating it through aria.

Though there is the method of directly destroying the formations as well, however usually, the moment it's broken, it'll activate, because there are functions which alarm the other formations that one has been broken, so releasing them all by aria is actually the only way.

However, this method only works for the person that placed the magical powers into the aria. conversely, if the person can directly manipulate magic, it's possible to dismantle them without allowing them to set off other traps even without a key.

Hajime's group completely neutralized the Imperial castles dungeon which the Empire is so proud of, the Cells are opened one after another through transmuting from Hajime, all members of the Hauria were also completely recovered through Yue's Reproduction magic.

[Ha~a, as ridiculous as always huh. For the time being, boss……]

[[[[[[[[[Thanks for coming to save us!]]]]]]]]]

[O. Ma~a, it was for Shia. She was worried. Moreover, I don't see Cam's appearance. …..Do you know where he is?]

[About that…..]

One of the Hauria began to speak, apparently Cam is currently being interrogated, the position of the interrogation room was also told.

They, by all means, also wanted to rescue their Chief! Though they appealed for it, they weren't allowed to help out, because they also understood that leaving it to Hajime and them who already invaded this place would be best, believing in Hajime's words they entrusted it to them.

In the first place, their bodies began shaking intensely because of Hajime's "Order".....

Hajime, a metallic plate about the size of his palm was taken out from the "Treasure Warehouse." It had a lustrous gray shine, there's a magic formation carved on the handle and the tip was jagged, it was basically shaped like a key.

In front of the confused Hauria, Hajime pours magic into the key type plate, then he pushed it out slowly into the space in front.

Then, the tip of the key type plate pierced through the space in front, a ripple formed and expanded vertically. The ripple gradually grows until it became the size of an adult human being, then Hajime literally twisted the key type plate with a ~guri~ just like a normal key.

Immediately after that, a "hole" extends around the Key type plate, when it fully extended out to a size of an adult human being the Hauria were popeyed, the rock zoned area could be seen on the

other side.

[Alright, all of you pass through this. On the other side is the rock zone that's a little bit to the left of the Imperial capital. Pal and the rest are on standby there]

[Yes Sir! Boss, please take care of the chief]

Though the Hauria were dumbfounded at the lack of common sense that occurred, it was the Ha in Hajime! When they regained their consciousness, it was obviously due to the boss! as soon as they finally understood, they saluted wonderfully. And, they passed through the gate created by the artifact without hesitation, the fellows with Usamimi's were trained well.

What Hajime took out was, an artifact that produces a gate for super-long distance space transfer.

It was a pair key type artifact, "Gate Key", and the keyhole artifact, "Gate Hall", when thrusting out the gate key into space this process was "Opening the Lock", the gate then connects the space to the place in the gate hall that is set up before hand in order to be transferred to it. Of course, it was created with a combination of space magic and creation magic.

When the Hauria were transferred, the gate is used again to "Lock" the hole in space shut, Hajime and the rest then headed for the place that Cam was being kept.

The severe security was broken through by skills and magic, they

quickly reached the location.

The person at watch outside was quickly knocked out silently and they arrived in front of the door, an angry voice could be heard from the inside.

Shia's expression freezes. She had prepared herself because an injured Cam would likely be on the other side, the feelings of worrying about a tattered family member began to well up.

Its seen, so Hajime put his hand on the doorknob and was about to open it at once, but he stopped instinctively because of the angry voice that came from the other side.

[What, make a firmer fist first! Are you even a soldier of the Empire! Use your hip more, you "Beep" that is only useful to "Beep"! You're just like a "Beep" thats been "Beep"! A new born kittens fists is better than yours! What happened! Are you mortified, at least break a bone! If you can't, you're just "Beep" after all!]

[Sh, shut up! Why do i have to listen to anything you say!]

[Get those hands moving if you have time to move that mouth of yours! Is your hand "Beep" is it your lover, huh? Ah, in the end your lover must also be a "Beep" too huh? You "Beep" and "Beep" are well matched for each other!]

[D, damn you! Natasha is not that kind of woman!]

[St, stop Johann! You shouldn't do that! This guy will die!]

[Shit, is that fellow there a "Beep" as well. The empire's soldiers, every single one of them are "Beeps" huh! Or better yet, why don't

you guys just rename yourselves to “Beep”! You pair of “Beep”! You’re both about equal, how about showing some murderous intent!]

[What was that! What did this guy just say! This guy can’t possibly be a Usagininzoku! Somebody answer me!]

[I’ve had enough of this! When I talk with this guy, I feel like I’m going to lose my mind!]

such a shout leaks out from the door and is heard.

Everyone was quiet. While looking down at his own hand that was on the doorknob, he began to doubt himself of this event that went against common sense, the empire soldiers that were supposed to be questioning Cam, were actually being cornered instead.

[Naa, is our help necessary?]

[……lets return?]

[……Say, sorry for now, but please help him. Because I don’t think he’ll be able to leave by himself…..]

Shia yearns for the gentle father of the past, she asked Hajime while looking far-off into the distance. Actually, we would definitely have to help Cam because he doesn’t have the power to get away by himself…..

[Shit, do you know how to do anything besides moving your lips. I am the dark hunting ogre from the wriggling abyss, Cam von fantasy, L F light, the rhode rear, to become the enemies of the

Hauria, its still much too early!]*Yeah, this whole line was a huge mess, I don't really know what i was doing here*

From the other side, something with incredibly bad sense was said.

[……Shia, your father, something amazing was just said]

[……The more you think about it, the more confusing it gets]

[Uu…..does my father have a grudge against me? Trying to kill his own daughter through embarrassment]

Shia was crouched down and covered both her hands over her face. The amount of damage seems to have been serious.

And, as for the condition of serious damage, the interrogators were also the same.

[I've already told you, I don't get it! Damn, I don't want this anymore! If I have to stay with this madman any longer i'll go insane! I'm going home!]

[Wait, Johann! What about work! In the first place, what's with those lines, its sinister so stop it!]

The sound approaching the door could be heard ~Dota Dota~.

Hajime then thought, [As expected, it was too much for them huh~], he then formed a fist in front of the door.

And, the moment that the door is loudly opened, his fist thrusted out.

One of the interrogator's called Johann, for an instant [Eh?] his face was full of surprise and astonishment, the fist of steel was buried in his face the next second and he was blown back into the room.

Hajime then, steps into the room, fortunately similarly, the other interrogator was stunned as well and in that instant he was also knocked out.

And, the two people that were knocked out instantaneously formed a bad pose with their bodies. Whoever discovers this would have a variety of misunderstandings.

[It can't be…..is that you….boss?]

[Ahh, what to say, even though you're in tatters you still abused them with words. …..You've become strong, in various amounts of ways…..]

To begin with, it was in the meaning of the 2 that were just blown away a moment ago.

[Ha, hahaha. It seems like I'm not dreaming….O~o, Yue and Shia as well]

For a moment, Cam seems to have thought it was a dream, he replied to Hajime with more power this time, though he's more tattered than the other Hauria's were. His intellectual powers haven't dropped either, he seemed to have immediately guessed that Hajime and them came to help.

[Jeez, I've shown you guys a bad appearance even though we've finally been reunited. Moreover I was busy abusing the damn empire fellows, I didn't even notice your presences…..Jeez, it's shameful]

[……Father, I don't think it was that kind of problem anymore. You need to quickly get to a hospital. Of course, for the treatment of your head…..in the first place, with those wounds why are you so energetic]

[through willpower?]

[…..Hajime's demon remodeling….how fearsome]

The constrained Cam was truly embarrassing, he scratched his head with a finger that was broken in a suitable direction towards his head *I'm not actually sure if its with his broken finger or non-broken finger*. His thoughtless answer was tsukkomied by Shia.

Yue who was using Reproduction magic, stared at Hajime rather than Cam with a frightened look. Hajime's thoughts. Truly frightening, rather than "Sergeant HarOman" was I the pathogen of "chuunibyou"…… *Thanks Endo*

Cam jumps up and down ~Pyon Pyon~ confirming that his body had completely recovered, Hajime then took out the gate key

again.

[I've already sent off the other guys first. Lets quickly leave]

[Yes, Sir! Ah, boss, about our equipment that was taken away….]

[Ahh? Just leave it, just leave it. With my current transmuting skills I can make more and better equipment than before, so lets just do that]

[I'll be able to enjoy new equipment? With that, my tension's shot up, kukuku]

To Cam who was laughing suspiciously, Shia pushed him into the gate and entered together, Hajime and Yue also went into the gate.

After that, the mysterious masked group causing a disturbance in the Imperial capital and the Hauria tribe that was in the Imperial castle both disappeared suddenly, It's needless to say, the Hoelscher empire was in an uproar until morning.

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soldier inside seemed to be safe. Though the majority of them had fainted.

The shadow of 4 people could be seen with the moon shining behind them in a grand manner.

[Who are you guys! Don't think you'll get away after defying the Empire!]

The person who looked like the head of the platoon said out angrily towards the shadows.

[Furthermore, furthermore……wearing those funny looking masks! Are you guys fooling around or what!]

[Eh? No, we're not exactly fooling around…..]

[No matter how you look at it its foolishness! Especially, the pink colored one!]

[!?]

[Do you feel that you're showing off your cuteness or something!? I only feel sick when I see that mask! You damn sex offenders!]

[!? …….I didn't have the intention to show off my cuteness. …….And its not like I like that kind of stuff in the first place…….I was forcefully…..It's not my fault……]

[Wait a second, don't mind what the uncle with the ugly face says Shizu…don't make fun of Pink! Suzu…..Yellow will really get mad!]

[Thats right! Shizu…it's alright to like pink and cute things! Thats

enough, if you hurt Pink anymore, I……Kamen*Mask* Red won't forgive you!]

[A~, for the time being, Kamen Blue also won't forgive you~]

As Kamen Pink's shoulder dejectedly drops, all the other Kamen shout back at the empire soldiers.

The masked groups goal was, to cause an uproar in the Imperial capital, in order to help Hajime's group to invade the castle easier….Hajime who accurately saw through Shizuku's facade, in order to stop Kouki from doing reckless things it was unavoidable unless another task was given to him, definitely when they return, she swore in her heart that she would get revenge on him.

While Kamen Pink was being depressed, the heated up empire soldiers suddenly, [Immediately catch those annoying masked guys!] and attacked. However, although they aren't equal to Hajime and his groups power, even still, they were summoned from another world, in other words, cheaters. The ordinary soldiers wouldn't stand a chance, one after another they were kicked about.

[Damn it all! Those damn masked guys are all too strong!]

[Damn you, Pink~]

[More like, that sword that Red is holding, I get the feeling that I've seen it before….]

The angry groan while laying on the ground was cursed out from the empire soldier. About 3 platoons were already unable to battle. The commander couldn't endure any longer and shouts out.

[Damn, you fellas, just exactly what is your purpose!]

to the question, Kamen Red stopped and declared loudly.

[I demand that all Demi-humans conditions are improved immediately!]

[……Ha～a?]

[Your speech and behaviors towards Demi-humans are too intolerable! Stop indiscriminately hurting them!]

Towards the impossible request given to the Empire soldiers, [What's that guy saying?], and they looked at each others expressions. That sounds about right. What Kamen Red and the others saw happening during the daytime, was common sense. Even if they were to suddenly be told to do that, they simply don't understand.

[Ku, what, the attitude…..it's just how things are done…..]

[This….Red. The insane ones, it's unfortunate but it's probably us. Don't forget about our other purpose as well]

[I know! But, at the very least just the children….]

[Do you know how many people that is. Do you plan on helping every child that you see? also, it should be almost time. ….Even I'm feeling mortified about this, but, now, lets properly focus on our objective]

[…..Yeah, your right]

Masked Red, withdrew reluctantly in understanding.

[Empire soldiers, Listen here. Our behavior is due to an arbitrary decision. So, the slaves had nothing to do with it so don't put the blame on them. If, you guys do something like that….]

[Wh, what is it you want to say…..]

[Tonight, behind you when you're taking a shower, when you've woken up and look at of your stomach, in an alley where there shouldn't be anyone else, under the desk, the gaps through the curtains, the edge of the mirror, in your dreams…..you'll always see a mask]

The empire soldiers towards the words that Kamen Pink indifferently said without intonations, all swallowed their saliva at once, and thought, [Scary….]. It was certainly a Horror film.

The masked group, after completing their goal said, [To~u!], that kind of feeling and jumped down from the building and into the back alley. And then, the Empire soldiers rushed after them in a panic, but they completely disappeared like phantoms.

Later, among the soldiers of the Empire, [Fear Kamen Pink~that fellow is always looking at you], an urban legend was spread, but that is another story.

Why, because when you're alone….., the person in the Pink mask breaking down is also another story.

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Extra 2

[That is all I have to report!]

[Good work, you may leave]

[Ha]

After the resounding footsteps of the subordinate that left disappeared for a while, Hoelscher Empires Emperor, Gaharudo D. Hoelscher, turned his sights onto the girl who had been talking a while ago.

It was Riria-na S.B. Hairihi, princess of Hairihi Kingdom with a cleansed face, when she noticed Gaharudo's glance, [It seems to be quite serious?], in a worried voice, a troubled smile was returned. As a princess of the neighboring country, anxiety could be felt due to the report heard just a while ago, however she knew not to interfere because she would only get in the way, such an expression was shown.

[Jeez, I'm troubled. Just after dealing with a ridiculously strong demon some ridiculously strong masked people show up, the strength of those 4 were certainly not a joke…..about this matter, what do you think about it? Princess Riria-na]
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[.....I, don't understand? Still, maybe it was the Majinzoku behind the scenes again? Because an impossible demon was used before, there may also be impossibly talented people as well?]

[yeah, that's right. ……There's a possibility of that. For example, one of those guys were able to freely manipulate high level magic with ease, there was even one with a sword that gave off a dazzling light, na?]

[……yes, that's right. It's a fearsome thing]

[Ah~, definitely. After being asked what their purpose was they started blabbering about improving the treatment of Demi-humans and their labor conditions, It's very frightening when its too incomprehensible, is what I think]

[that's, right]

Riria-na's expression doesn't collapse.

Gaharudo was amusingly observing Riria-na, it was an impregnable smile guard. Thats because, rather than a smile pasted on, it was an indispensable royal family secret skill, able to change their smiles depending on the current situation without fail.

However, Gaharudo did not not miss the slight moment where her breath was disturbed.

[By the way, Princess Riria-na]

[Yes?]

[Right now, where is Hero-kun?]

[.....The hero, presently, he's out traveling. In order to earn experience and power]

[Gee, and here I thought he surely came to the Imperial capital? And, I remember hearing about the emancipation of slaves from someone before as well]

[Oh dear, Emperor Gaharudo about what you've just said, have you confused speculation as truth? There's no way that would have happened right?]

[Hahaha, of course! Speculation without proper grounds cannot be considered a fact]

[Fufufu, yes, thats right]

After a while, [Hahaha], [Fufufu], the laughter of the Emperor and Princess resounded throughout the reception room.

Seemingly, though it looked like Riria-na had confidence, in her heart.

(What are you guys doing! Kouki and co.---!! I mean, why masks!? There should have been many other ways to hide your identities! To begin with, using your sacred sword will obviously reveal your true identity! What a bad prank! Absolutely, it was definitely someone's prank! And, the only one who would do this is definitely Nagumo-san desu! Why, because of his prank, I the Princess have to deal with this stifling conversation with the Emperor! He always treats me casually too, but unexpectedly the things he does causes a lot of damage. Even though I'm the princess)

is, what she screamed inside.

Apparently, Hajime's masks were made in vain, their true identities were found out by both countries.

Gung Ho Once Again

This is not meant to be a perfect translation, I cannot read japanese characters and this was carefully edited based on translations I got from my Machine Translator. Therefore, there are bound to be errors here and there! At best, this could be considered as an unedited Final Draft towards an Official Translation

Cam was rescued, Hajime's group passed through the gate and teleported to where Teio and the other Hauria were standing guard at the rock zone, when they appeared they were greeted with the Hauria's enthusiastic welcome.

All of the Hauria pat each other on the shoulders, bumped their stomachs with one another, cross countered their arms, and they were all screaming as they were pleased that everyone returned safely.

At that time, Hajime's ears were filled with the loud shouts of joy which drowned out all the surrounding sounds.

Hajime's hand rose out with extremely natural movements. A familiar katana in a black sheath was gripped and held out.

[.....What do you plan on doing with that, Yaegashi?]

The identity of the assailant which attacked Hajime with the black katana while still in its sheath was Shizuku Yaegashi. Shizuku's blade was caught in the fingertips of Hajime's hand, she clicks her tongue when he wasn't phased at all even though she's applying all her strength in the attack.

[.....I'm only relying on Nagumo-kun to relieve some stress. It's alright, I, believe in Nagumo-kun. Your caliber is deeper than the Mariana trench……so, obediently! Allow me! To hit the octopus!]

[Ah~, Un, you didn't want to be Pink that much? ……I prepared that with good intentions in mind]

[Thats definitely a lie! I know what your intention was! It was absolutely a prank! Somehow I was pulled into the atmosphere! In a sense, I got what I deserved! ----As so, I can't help but beat it into you, these feelings! If you're a man then accept them!]

[Nna, how unreasonable…..]

Apparently Pink has suffered more damage than initially thought.

Certainly, it would have been fine if she declined, it was the natural consequences of being caught up in the atmosphere and accepting the mask. But, even though she understands that, it was obvious that it was Hajime's speech and behavior which tricked her to be verbally abused by the empire soldiers, Shizuku couldn't help but snarl.

Most of all, Hajime and Shizuku's difference in ability is clear, actually, there was no signs of the black sheath which was making a ~Gichi Gichi~ noise overcoming that difference at all. So, reluctantly, Shizuku's black katana's ability-- she decided to release it. Literally, even Hajime would feel some pain if it was a direct hit, hoping that, she put her trust in it.

[You~! "Run rampant, Thunder flower"!]

[Oh? Oh~h]

However, while gripping the black sword which was discharging electricity, rather than being painful, Hajime's appearance was that of someone who feels admiration. Shizuku unintentionally shouted out a tsukkomi.

[Wait a sec, Nagumo-kun. Why are you still fine even though electricity is being released?]

[No, it's nothing much, you should have seen me shoot out railguns numerous times already. I use thunder with my own flesh, there's no way this degree of electricity would be enough then right? Rather than that, you did well to be able to activate that function.]

[Ku, it can't be helped then…..I'll withdraw this time. However, I'll hit that calm face one day. And also, this was due the results of all the synergists at the Kingdom.]

Shizuku withdrew reluctantly and gave a reasonable answer. Kouki and the rest were popeyed in the back. It appears that they've just returned. Shizuku's unexpected actions caused them to be surprised.

Kaori and Yue just keep staring at Shizuku from somewhere. Then whispered, [.....For Shizuku-chan to be snarling….] [.....We were too reliant on her], was said, it appears that the two were only having a playful exchange with one another.

[Boss, is this a good time?]

Finally, it seems that Cam's group was finished celebrating, they came forward towards Hajime. With their serious expressions, Hajime as well, it didn't seem like it would be a greeting of reuniting again.

Hajime quickly transmuted chairs in a circle and with a glance, conveyed for them to sit down.

[First, although a lot of things happened, putting it simply, it seems we went a little overboard……]

was said, when summarizing from when Cam's story began, it can only be stated that way.

In order to gain more Demi-humans slaves, The soldiers came into the battered Sea of Trees, Cam's group of Hauria had gained substantial numbers, and defeated them. The empire soldiers seemed to be extremely cautious of their surroundings. Their comrades kept on disappearing outside of the combat zones, and when they were found, their necks showed signs of assassinations.

The group specializing in the assassinations were a mystery, the Empire had no way of confirming their true identities. Then they thought out a plan. It was an encirclement of the Imperial capital. In short, they were inviting their foes.

Cam's group easily blundered and fell for the trap, but, it could only be said that it was because there was no telling when the empire might set foot into the Sea of Trees.

Or, many Demi-humans were captured and the blood went into their heads as they weren't able to overlook it, they might have rushed in too quickly when they saw a chance. The empire's attack burned down the edge of the Sea of Trees and while passing through the fog they were torturing the Demi-human slaves, the unjust methods may have also been the cause.

In the case that Fair Bergens was in its usual state, they would have likely been able to fight while moving in an organised manner, it's likely that they also knew that it was attacked by demons. Time is of the essence.

It was unthinkable in their miserable state, Cam's group wasn't completely calm either.

And, the Empire soldiers were likely the same. After all, the mysterious group carrying out the assassinations caught in the net were none other than the gentle Usagininzoku which would never be accused of fighting. Moreover, It was not the Sea of Trees, they made full use of cooperation to surround an empire soldier and fought equally. Naturally, the lack of common sense caught the higher up's interests.

As a result,

[We were captured alive, and were interrogated day after day. The other side was mainly interested on how the Hauria tribe had changed so suddenly and where they got their equipment, and, they intended to go to Fair Bergen. It appears that they mistook us as Fair Bergen's secret force……actually, the whole clan was close

to being executed, if our relations were found out it's likely that it wouldn't end with just banishment]

The interrogators, asked for the relationship of Fair Bergen and themselves, though it was said various times that they had a rather hostile relationship with them, it was taken as a self-sacrificial action in order to protect their own country. Especially because they had fearless smiles even when his Majesty the Emperor came to watch the interrogations, his eyes shined like a child who found a new toy.

[And? what's with your excuses for becoming captives? Just hurry and speak of the main subject]

[Pardon me, boss. Then, the main subject, we gathered many more new family members for the Hauria in order to create a new Hauria tribe*I think thats what he means, 我々ハウリア族と新たに家族として向かえ入れた者を合わせた新生ハウリア族は*…..With that we picked a war with the empire]

Cam declared with an accomplished sharp look in his eyes, the time for all those around stopped.

Under the illusion, Hajime and excluding everyone in Cam's Hauria tribe, all movements stopped and became stiff. Whether they haven't understood yet, or due to the surprise of the idea. Silence filled the surroundings, the cries of insects could be heard in the rock zone during the night.

It was Shia who broke the silence.

[What, what are you talking about, father? Did I hear it wrong? Just now, I was supposed to hear the reason why my family was fighting against the empire……]

[Shia, you didn't mishear. We hauria tribe, picked a war against the empire. I definitely said that]

[Don't, don't, don't say such foolish things! Just what were you thinking! Certainly, you guys have become strong, but don't you guys only have around 100 people? Even then to fight the empire? Have you gone mad! Because of the resentment of being robbed of the same race, you've become unable to judge properly right!?]

[Shia, thats not it. We're sane. listen to…..]

[I don't have to use my Usamimi's to listen! If its not revenge, you're just getting full of yourselves then? If so, take up your weapons right now! I'll be your opponent before you guys fight the empire. Allow me to cut down that extended nose of yours!]

In an excited state, Shia took out Doryukken out of the "Treasure Warehouse", and one rotation was made with the strong style and a ~Bishi~! Shia pointed it towards Cam's nose. Her expression was way past recklessness, it was nothing but pure rage at the thought of Cam and the others who had decided on the suicide attack.

Shia's magic power pours out around her body in a light blue color with physical pressure which overpowered them, it even exceeded the top Hero's from a different world which would be considered cheats.

Truthfully, this rage of unimaginable power is not something you'd expect from Shia who's always energetically laughing, Kouki's group were holding their breaths. However, Cam who had Doryukken pointed at him with enough power to cause the hero's to flinch, only quietly stared at Shia just like the surface of calm

water.

They stare at eachother, or, while holding their breaths everyone was staring at the two, as expected this man moved, it was Hajime. Before anyone was aware, Hajime had already approached Shia from behind, as if Shia was a wild animal he grabbed her fluffy bunny tail to calm her down, suddenly rubbing it was beyond strange.

[Hiyaan~!? Don't~, that place is no good~! Hajime-Shan*Not a typo*, shtop it~]

Actually, in a different sense it felt better than having her Usamimi's felt, when her bunny tail was being felt by Hajime it started "feeling good".

Shia fell onto all fours, started leaking out hot sighs ~Haa Haa~, and stared at Hajime reproachfully. However, her eyes were wet and feverish too, she was only emphasizing her charming figure and nothing else in this situation.

In the intimidating situation, everyone was popeyed because in an instant the atmosphere turned pink. There were also a few in the group that were slouching over too.

Disregarding their surroundings, this time Hajime stroke Shia's Usamimi's. Although it wasn't in an erotic way like before, it was gentle like driving away the pain. Though Shia glared at Hajime reproachfully who started sexually harassing her in the middle of a serious talk, soon it became eyes that seemed pleasant.

[How about it, have you calmed down a bit? Cam's story isn't finished yet. It wouldn't be too late to blow them all away after first hearing everything right?]

[U~.....that's right…..I'm sorry. Too much blood went into my head for a moment. I'm alright now. I'm sorry father]

[What's bad about worrying about your family? There's no need to apologise. like-wise, I should have listen to your words as well. …….Thanks for everything recently, I tend to forget those concerns. ……Even so, kukuku]

[Wh, what is it, father, laughing like that….]

[No, I only hope for your happiness above all else. …..You seem to be loved a fair bit by the boss? Un? When will I be able to see my grandchild's face?]

[Na, gryand, gryandchild*she mispronounces it* you say…..what are you saying, father! We, we haven't, I…..]

Cam was teasing her, Shia glances upwards at Hajime frequently while her face was bright red-hot. All the Hauria that sees it were smirking greatly. Really, each and every person showed good personalities. Hajime, while thinking of such things, ignored it lightly and asked Cam.

[Cam, though I wouldn't have believed it, about that talk, you're not expecting me to participate are you?]

[Haha~, there's no way I would. Only, the reason this decision was even possible was due to the boss for training us. Therefore, our decision is our own, at least thats what I believe]

Cam denies Hajime's question while laughing. It appears that they really plan on only doing it by themselves.

However if that happens, the decision couldn't be anything but recklessness, so they began to worry about the reason that led to such a decision. Shia as well, Cam and them were getting too full of themselves with their power, they were really serious about not going at it for revenge as well, a sorrowful expression is shown.

[Whats the reason?]

[Thats unexpected, do you want to hear it? I thought you weren't interested though…..]

[If your decisions were thanks to me training you guys, then when you guys do something careless wouldn't it also reflect back on me? If its just that much, it's not something I shouldn't know…..]

Saying so, Hajime glanced at Shia for an instant. Cam guessed what his intent was, his eyes loosened up and joyfully, [I see], with a nod, he begins to speak about the reason.

[As said a little while ago, the Usagininzoku have caught the Emperor's interest. And its a very strong interest. The empire is a country where people who believes the principle that abilities reign supreme gather, the emperor isn't free of that saying either. And, their senses of values of weak people are natural according to their principles being ingrained into their characters]

[In other words, you want to say that the Emperor will begin hunting the Usagininzoku for you? Rather than killing you guys, but in order to make you guys his?]

[Affirmative. While I was still being interrogated, the Emperor

himself came, “I’ll keep you” he said. Of course, I spat at him on immediately….]

Towards Cam spitting on the Emperor’s face and then verbally abusing him, the Hauria said, [As expected of the Chief!] while getting fired up, Kouki’s group said, [You did that to that Emperor!?] while exposing their surprise.

No one could blame them though. In history, Cam was likely the first person of all races to have spat saliva on the Emperors face. Even Hajime as well, unintentionally raised a voice of admiration, [Ho~o].

[However, it seems to have had an opposite effect. Capturing all of the Usagininzoku and then training them seemed to be interesting, while laughing loudly with an extremely greedy face. When he declared it, his face was quite serious. Once again he’ll advance onto the Sea of Trees, more Usagininzoku will be attacked this time. Also, Fair Bergen hasn’t finished rebuilding yet, they won’t be able to endure another attack. Therefore, it’ll be likely that the Empire will demand all Usagininzokus to be handed over for them to cease their attack….]

[I get it now. If this is handled passively, they’ll literally rob you of all your family……]

[Affirmative. If its so that only the Hauria survive, it’s not that difficult to do. However, because of us, all the the other Usagininzoku will be deprived of their futures….it’s too much]

It seems that it was a bigger problem than initially thought, Cam’s group was cornered situationally.

It was as Cam had said, Just the Hauria surviving wouldn’t be too

difficult if they devoted themselves to escaping and guerrilla warfare while making use of the Sea of Trees, But all the other Usagininzoku will be seeing hell. If they cannot answer the Emperors wish of “Strong Usagininzokus”, women, and children will probably be killed rather than being turned into a pet slave.

[But, you can’t really believe that an army of a little over 100 will be enough to stand against the Empire right?]

[Of course. A head-on collision while shouting courageously would be out of the question. We are Usagininzokus, we won’t lose to any other race in terms of stealth operations]

Cam said while smiling from ear to ear. Hajime also guessed his intentions.

[In other words, Assassination?]

[Affirmative. if they bear their fangs at us, the first moment that they’ve relaxed, their necks will fly from a blade in the darkness….In practice, fear and sense of crisis will be planted into those fellows. Always not knowing where attacks are coming from, the Usagininzoku will show their power that only their race can do. We are neither weak nor lower ranked, they’ll realise that we’re a threat that requires absolute resolution of death to attack]

[The Emperors entire clan, don’t you think that there have already been measures placed against assassination?]

[Of course they probably do. However, we’re not aiming for the Emperor’s clan, it’s the humans around their environment. As expected, none of the surrounding humans would have severe defenses. Yesterday, today, the humans who have been intimate, one person, and then another person will disappear. What we can do at the moment is this, I think it’ll be pretty effective. Then finally, it’ll be perfect if they create a policy of noninterference for

us]

It was an indescribably unsophisticated plan. However, rather than saying that they'll assassinate the Emperors clan, they thought of a very realistic idea.

however, thats it, because there's not enough time to make the Empire feel any kind of threat, It's more likely that it'll cause a full-scale retaliation, will the Empire decide to completely annihilate the Usagininzoku, or will they feel threatened and decide to negotiate at a table, it's obvious which decision would be made. They're taking part in a very bad gamble.

However it still needs to be done, the Usagininzoku will have a dark future either way. Everyone has an expression which shows that they've already prepared themselves.

[....Father…..you all….]

Shia's shoulders dejectedly drop. Turning the empire soldiers into enemies, the Usagininzokus which just broke out of the dungeon in the Imperial castle which would in other words be called a prison, If the Emperor doesn't overlook his own interests for his duty to the public, she could also guess what would happen.

The road left for the Usagininzokus, would they be able to dessert all the other families in order for the Hauria to survive, would all members be happy about becoming toys of the Empire, will they risk their lives and fight, there's only one choice.

[Shia, Don't make such a face. We won't run away like before while being looked down on, we'll eventually overrun them, submitting to them reluctantly would be an ungraceful thing to do…..Now, we'll fight like this, to be able to have this will, we're extremely glad]

[But!]

[Shia, to win the right to live, we'll fight. However, our purpose is not to live. Our purpose is to live with honor as the Hauria. Against any kind of power, if we retreat now, in the end we'll be the same losers that we were in the past. Only that cannot be permitted]

[Father…..]

[Look forwards, Shia. Don't look back at us anymore. You should have already decided. When going with boss outside, in order to advance ahead. With that determination, advance forwards]

Cam, not as the chief and not as the leader of the battle group, but as a father, pushed his daughters back. They cannot allow them to stop any further, the others also wished for them to continue advancing forwards.

After being looked with gentle eyes Shia's expression turns upside down which seemed like she was going to cry, Cam changes his glance to Hajime and nods. he was gesturing for him to take care of his daughter.

Instead of Hajime, Kouki had a silent expressionless face, Indeed, [I'll do something about it!] he said as he got up despite the atmosphere, Shizuku hit the back of his head with her black katana. It appears that stress has built up, her way of stopping him became extreme unlike her usual self.

When Hajime didn't show any reactions, Shia looked back at Hajime. However, before Shia opened her mouth, Cam called out in a strong tone for her to stop as he guessed her intentions.

[Shia!]

It was shocking! so much that Shia's body was shaking.

Cam and them had no intentions of asking for Hajime's help in the first place. The situation was their own consequence for falling for the Emperors trap. Here, relying on Hajime's powers and entrusting him with the solution would mean that nothing has changed. As Cam said, this is a fight to carry on the Usagininzokus pride which is on the line.

And, Shia also understood that. She could also only run away before so she understands, Now, there is the pride of being Hajime and Yue's companion. But, she feels sad that her family has to make a gamble with such bad stakes.

In the end, Shia kept quiet without being able to say anything.

Hajime, glanced at Yue for an instant and scratched his head then sighed. And, as you would expect, Yue's eyes softened and noded as she understood what he wanted to convey. Hajime smiled a little and calls out to Shia who was looking down.

[Shia]

[Hajime-san….]

Shia's eyes showed expectations slightly.

[This time there's no way I can fight]

[I….I see. That's right]

But, the words followed by Hajime caused her to look down again. In the back Kouki is shouting something, disregarding that the electrical current from the black katana caused him to faint when hit from the side, Hajime grabbed Shia's cheeks which were sunk due to jumping to a hasty conclusion.

[Oi, you, don't jump to a hasty conclusion. Though I won't fight, I didn't say I wouldn't help did I?]

[Fe?]

To Hajime's words, a silly reply was given while her cheeks were being stretched. Kam's group also looked at one another with a bemused expression trying to interpret the meaning of Hajime's words.

[This matter, the Hauria family must show their strength. You should let the other party know that the Hauria tribe is not an easy opponent. The Demi-human discrimination is common sense in this world, if I fight to protect them, the same situation would begin

again when I'm gone. Above all, there is Cam and their wills. Thats why, I will not take one step in this battle]

There Hajime patted Shia's cheeks and turned his gaze to Cam.

[However, our energetic companion is making this kind of face, if you thought I'll obediently stay out of this matter, your greatly mistaken?]

[H, however, boss….then, just what….]

To Cam who displayed a deep perplexity, Hajime with a fearless grin declared.

[Cam, and the Hauria tribe. All of this guys odd strategies are hereby rejected. You all directly point your blades at the Emperor's neck. Grab his hair and drag him down, his relatives, his friends, pin down all of his subordinates in front of him. Suppress the Imperial castle, if help does not come, the Empire would be finished by the end of night! engrave it into their bones that the Hauria tribe can finish them anytime they want! Anywhere in this world, there is no safe place, if you antagonize the Hauria tribe, the neck cutting parade begins, force them to write it into their Empire's history!]

Silence fills the area. Everyone became drunk of stiffness from Hajime's spirit. ~Gokuri~ The sound of saliva being swallowed could be heard clearly.

Hajime while glaring at the surroundings, shouted out in an angry

voice which could be mistaken as thunder which makes everyone breathless.

[What's your answer! You "Beep's"!]

[[[[[[[[[~!? S, Sir, Yes, Sir!!]]]]]]]]]

[I can't hear you! You maggots plan to go to war like that! In the end are you guys just a group of "Beep's"!?]

[[[[[[[[[Sir, No, Sir]]]]]]]]]*There's one extra bracket now to emphasize their voices lol*

[If you're not, then prove it! Rather than going after the small fry, go for the King!!]

[[[[[[[[[Gung Ho! Gung Ho! Gung Ho!]]]]]]]]]]*google the phrase if you dont understand*

[With the blade of revenge and the guts that you've sharpened, cut down anyone who obstructs you!]

[[[[[[[[[Behead! Behead! Behead!]]]]]]]]]]

[I'll thoroughly prepare you, the lead role belongs to you guys! I won't permit halfheartedness! Do you understand!]

[[[[[[[[[Aye, Aye, Sir!!!]]]]]]]]]]

[Very well! Get fired up! The new Hauria tribe, with 122 people…..]

[[[[[[[[[.....]]]]]]]]]]

[You will bring down the Imperial castle!]

[[[[[[[[[YAHAAAAAAAAAAAAAA!!!!]]]]]]]]]

What do you plan on preparing, isn't it impossible to bring down

the Imperial castle, such thoughts and doubts flew away from the heads of the Hauria who were completely excited.

The person that calls himself boss is saying that he'll give them the key that opens the door to them. Then, if they don't wait and go on cutting their obstacles that lie ahead, it'll be the shame of the new Hauria tribe. They won't be able to show their face in public and even to Hajime who trained them. Therefore, the Hauria's heart and minds become one, they were burning up with fighting spirit to bring down the Imperial castle.

In the rock zone away from the Imperial capital, the shouts of fighting spirit and murderous intent resounds.

[U~u, Shizu, Shizu, those people are scary~]

[You'll be alright, Suzu. I'm scared too……I mean, in the first place Nagumo-kuns idea is already scary in itself]

[Nagumo-kun, that guy…….Hehe, who would have thought that he'd take on the role of HarOman-sensei, he's not too bad]

[Ryutaro!? Why, do I sense a little intimacy!? No matter how you look at it, its an abnormal atmosphere!?]

Shizuku and them could only stare with a dumbfounded expression at the Hauria who were wrapped in a strange heat. A smile seems to have appeared on one person who was in awe and increased his respect towards Hajime.

[U~mu, this is awesome~. For the Usagininzoku to change this much. As expected of master. To make crushing the Empire the

goal immediately. I can't get enough of this~. I want to be abused with such spirit]

[.....Shut up, perverted dragon]

[~!? haha]

[Un, Teio-san read the mode a little? Rather than that, look at Shia's expression, Yue. She melted]

[.....N, cute. So that Shia doesn't cry…..it's obvious I'm happy]

[That's right~. It is good, I also want that kind of thing said to me~]

Yue, did she know this was going to happen from the beginning, the darkness in Shia's eyes were wiped out and it gradually softened, though Kaori feels relieved when she sees so, she was also envious of Shia.

Afterwards, Hajime gave out the details of bringing down the Imperial castle, it was then decided that they would rest in preparation until that time.

Shia, for a while did not want to part from Hajime's side. Her usual energetic self was rather silent, However, she wasn't depressed, she snuggled up while blushing and held onto the hem of Hajime's clothes quietly.

Her Usamimi's occasionally when touching Hajime backed off and touch again. As it is, it's nothing but showing feelings of wanting to be by Hajime's side.

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[.....Will Shia become “Special” too?]

[.....That’s, Naa. This worlds number one, although number two would be a tough fight……the “Special” one is only Yue after all]

[.....Mu~u, it would be fine if it’s Shia……but, it’s troubling that I’m happy]

Yue’s expression was a complicated mix of happy feelings and troubled feelings.

Inside of Yue, it was her first friend that she made after getting out of the Abyss, it was her companion, and, Shia’s existence was that of a younger sister to her which seemed to also be an exception. Thats why, she wouldn’t allow the “special” seat to belong to any of the other women. Therefore, though she’s happy from the words of the single-minded Hajime, she becomes troubled by his obstinate outline.

To Yue’s appearance, Hajime gets offended a little. To be troubled for not allowing any other special women, somehow or another it offended him. So, for the time being, in order to not think about this situation anymore he decided to attack Yue’s lips with no questions asked.

[N~.....N~, Ah mu~u….Haji~.....N~]

The eastern skies finally start brightening more and more, it begins to create a shadow behind the two people. The perfectly overlapped shadow occasionally separate but quickly overlapped

again, because of that, vivid sounds resounded each time.

Yue's eyes moistened up in a fever, her cheeks were pink, and her lips shined glossily. Exactly as Hajime had intended. As it was, the movements of the two people as if natural, continued….they began to hear the voice of another person from the other side of the rock shade where Hajime had tried to do it.

[O~i, Nagumo. Are you there?]

Apparently it was Kouki, he came to look for Hajime who was not in his bed. Because his positivity has risen as well, everyone will likely wake up soon.

[Chi, it was just getting good, that bastard. Although I can stomach that he wants to learn some Age of Gods magic in the case of more like Nointo shows up……In various ways, this has become troublesome]

While cursing, there was no helping it, Hajime tried to stand up while holding Yue, but it didn't happen.

Because,

[Hajime, I won't let you escape. N]

[Hey, wa~]

It was because Yue pushed down Hajime. While riding Hajime's waist then rising halfway up and positioning herself down to his waist again, Yue attacked Hajime this time.

[Kouki, was Nagumo-kun there?]

[Ahh, His presence can be felt somewhere around here!?]

Shizu and Suzu appeared behind Kouki, Ryutaro also showed up. Kouki took a detour around a rock while answering Shizuku, but he instinctively stiffens up when he witnessed the spectacle. While looking at the suspicious Kouki who stopped at the other side of the rock, Shizuku and them also peaked over the rock…..~Bishi~! they stiffened up.

In addition, from behind Shia, Kaori, and Teio are coming over. And, while dubiously seeing the stiff group, detoured around the rock……

[Hey~~~! Just what are you two doing so early in the morning!]

[.....Mu, Shia coming in too?]

[Eh? Is that alright? Then….]

[There's no way that'll be alright! Hurry up and separate! Attacking each other in the morning, how envi…..I mean, unreasonable!]

[Mu~u, am I no good? Just beating me a little would be fine though……]

While feeling the tiredness in the state of chaos manifested in the

morning, this time around, Hajime lifts up Yue in one hand, and warded off Shia who was applying physical reinforcement onto her body to take up the previous offer, [Uu~, Uu~] Kaori groans out, Just like the pervert wanted, a strike hit her cheek [Ahan~] while controlling the condition he increased its force.

In a place a bit away, Kouki's group who had stiffened up began to come to their senses. Suzu, [They're adults, They're adults~] although her face was still stiff her face became heated and dyed in red, Shizuku was carrying her by the side. However, that Shizuku's ear's were completely red.

The eastern sun that breaks out in the sky, though its also the signal which leads the Hauria to a battle for a new life…..it was a very stupid beginning for the start.

Imperial Castle - Beginning

This is not meant to be a perfect translation, I cannot read japanese characters and this was carefully edited based on translations I got from my Machine Translator. Therefore, there are bound to be errors here and there! At best, this could be considered as an unedited Final Draft towards an Official Translation

The Imperial castle which symbolizes the Hoelscher empire, surrounded by a deep waterway that is about 20-meters in depth, also surrounded by strong castle walls where magic-like defenses were active. Guards are always stationed on the castle walls, even an aquatic demon would be shot in the waterways, as an entrance, there is only one front gate with a huge drawbridge.

The people who are able to come to the Imperial castle is also limited, only people who have permits imbued with magic are allowed to enter. In front of the drawbridge, there's a huge post that resembles the triumphal arches in France, If you don't clear the examination to enter the castle here, you wouldn't be allowed to cross the drawbridge at all. If you try the impolite way and invade the castle, you'd be thrown into the waterways where demons thrive.

The inspection at the post is also quite merciless. For example, even if you were a trader of supplies going in and out with an entrance permit through regular procedures, every product would be inspected one by one. Therefore, it's also impossible to try to invade by hiding in the luggage.

In other words, what I want to say is that, trying to trespass into the Imperial castle is extremely, extremely, difficult.

Towards that kind of fact, Kouki thought about it while waiting in line at the castle inspection ahead of the triumphal arch, he looked back and glanced over his shoulder. There, his usual party members and his childhood friends Shizuku, Ryutaro, Suzu, and also Hajime's group were there.

Kouki's group came back to the Imperial capital in order to enter the Imperial castle in a dignified manner.

Kouki's thoughts. They were a diversion to allow Cam and them to escape the prison without additional commotions, and. Obviously, because Hajime had magic that allowed transfer through space he went with them on the rescue, although escaping wouldn't be that difficult, if the security is already this severe just to enter, the guards inside of the Imperial capital is better left unsaid.

Lets say that you knew of the dungeons location through questioning beforehand, if the exact location is not understood, space magic transfer to a pinpoint location couldn't be used. Thats why, after invading, its necessary to search on foot. Still, there's no helping it that you would tip your hat to the person who accomplished such things without being caught. Kouki instinctively felt the "difference" between them again, [Ha~a], and leaked out a sigh.

By the way, an outside military unit was in charge of the distraction that kouki's group caused, because it's impossible for the military units in the Imperial castle to come out explicitly, it was hardly useful at all. Somewhat like, [What happened?], it was only on a slightly higher level than unrest.

[Next~.....you're an unfamiliar face. ……Let me see your permit]

The guard soldiers looked at Kouki's group with a suspicious expression.

The amount of people who can enter the Imperial castle is limited, so the guards know most of the faces. And, normally on their first visits people wear their best clothes, however they were extremely well equipped for a group that's been invited to the Imperial castle for the first time. Thats why, like Kouki's group, people dressed up like adventurers are rare. They were suspicious so they began to become more cautious.

[No, we don't have any permits, in its place, we have this…..]

[Ha? A status plate? Just what……]

Naturally, Hajime and them did not have a permit to enter the Imperial castle. But, Kouki's position is useful here. After all, he is the "Hero". The trump card of the human race whom God sent into the game with the Majinzoku race and was viewed publicly as "God's Apostle". For example, even if that wasn't the actual reality of the situation.

Although the guard gave them dangerous looks when they said they didn't have permits, his eyes twinkled when he read the characters "Hero" displayed on the status plate, he alternately looks back and forth between the status plate and kouki's face. From the guards reaction, the surrounding colleagues were beginning to pay attention.

[Ehtto……Hero……sama, right? God's apostle that was summoned

in the Kingdom?]

[Ah, yes, that's right. I'm the hero. Though I came with princess Ririana who is here……due to a few circumstances]

[Ha, Ha～a…..]

From the guard's mutter, his colleagues learned of Kouki's identity and began to become increasingly noisy. Their expressions were natural, [Why, did you come separately from princess Ririana?] [Why, didn't you communicate this beforehand?], their questions were full of doubt.

However, the other party is God's apostle whom they believe in, surely they were in charge of a secret mission that was given to them, for the time being, they passed the word to the higher-ups.

As expected, even for the hero, because they didn't have the courage to let a person who wasn't scheduled to enter the castle with their own discretion, several guards disappeared while dashing into the Imperial castle as they were frightened to rudely keep them waiting.

Hajime and them are placed in the waiting room of the post.

After waiting 15 minutes.

Disregarding "Yue who was on Hajime's Knee" which became a scene so natural that nobody bothers to tsukkomi anymore, Shia was sitting on the other Knee, Kaori and Teio formed a partnership at the last second and held on to his hands respectively, then they began to hear the ～Dota Dota～ footsteps coming from the

drawbridge.

[I heard that the Hero's group had come here….Is it you guys?]

[Ah, yes, that's right. That's us]

While saying so and showing his appearance, it was an especially large empire soldier, it's possible to tell that he's of a higher rank from the attitudes of the surrounding soldiers. He, while impudently staring at Kouki, and checking Kouki's status plate, he began to glance at the other members in investigation.

In the process, when Shia who was in the blind spot was seen, his eyes opened widely in surprise. And he began grinning an unpleasant smile of interest. Towards the unpleasant glance, Shia's body shakes slightly.

[I've confirmed it. I am the commander of the third regiment, Grid Half. Word of the hero's group has already entered princess Ririana's ears as well, she's waiting in her room. I'll have my subordinate guide you. ……By the way, hero, the Usagininzoku? She doesn't have a slave collar on her right?]

[Eh? No, she's…..]

The man who introduced himself as Grid Half asked about Shia as he returned the status plate.

However, Kouki was troubled on how to answer. She wasn't a slave, the choker that Shia wore looked nothing like a slave's

collar, he hesitated if he should declare that she was Hajime's lover or not. [Even if you ask me such things……] he honestly replied.

Did Kouki's answer allow him to judge to not expect anything which cause him to become quiet, Grid glanced over towards Shia. And, they managed to guess the reason why he is so intensely paying attention to Shia.

[Yo～o, Usagi lass. I've got a few questions for you. ……What happened to my subordinates?]

[Subordinates? …..Um….what do you…..]

From Grid's sudden question.

For an instant, although Shia had no idea what he was talking about, she seemed to have guessed and her eyes were opened wide in astonishment.

The empire soldiers who had a direct relation to Shia were limited. It was naturally, the group of people that cornered the Hauria tribe when leaving the Sea of Trees. Many family members were killed, abducted, placed into slavery, and it was the enemies that drove Shia to go to the [Raisen Great Canyon].

[It's odd huh? Even though she's returned, none of my subordinates came back, why are you still alive and in such a place? A～a?]

[Ua～.....]

Grid gradually approached to corner Shia.

Right, he was the commander of the forces that attacked Shia's group that came out of the Sea of Tree's before. Because Grid who was the regiment commander didn't personally come to capture Shia, she had no memories of ever seeing Grid before, however Grid firmly recalled that there was a rare Usagininzoku with blue-white hair.

In Shia's mind, the expressions of the empire soldiers had when attacking to tease them and the sense of hopelessness of losing a family member at that time, flashed back. While unconsciously raising out a groan and her expression stiffening up, one step, trying to back away…..she felt a warm touch on her cheeks and became startled.

If you look, just as usual, Hajime picked up shia's cheeks. And, immediately after that, she felt warmth in her hand. That was Yue.

Her eyes looking up showed no worries, if anything it was amazement, a slight color of scolding appeared though. It seemed to imply, [Don't be overwhelmed by small fries of this level, Greenhorn].

Shia who was looking at Yue and Hajime, with a wry smile said, [I'm alright now]. No matter how you looked at it, the events which took placed was a trauma, the present Shia was unmistakably a strong person who had enough power and spirit to crush the monsters in the great labyrinths to pieces. There's no reason for her to be overwhelmed by the pressure that one officer

was releasing.

Shia with an attractive smile after decisively straightening her spine towards the approaching Grid. And declared to Grid who instinctively stopped advancing.

[I don’t know a thing about your subordinates. They were likely people who were slow in the head, maybe they were eaten by some kind of demon that appeared somewhere? Also, there’s no reason for me to answer your questions at all]

[.....You sure are getting full of yourself. A～a? Did you think you were safe because you’re with the Hero’s group? If you’re not a slave, then you probably solded away that body of yours? A prostitute's life, I won’t be taking such tongue from you]

Although Grid said those dangerous words while dangerously steeling up his eyes, Shia had already removed eye contact with Grid, her eyes told that she didn’t care. Rather, having called Shia a prostitute, the other women looked at Grid with anger.

While looking at Shia’s attitude, his veins appeared and his expression twisted with anger, when he noticed the looks, to deceive them he smiled and declared to Kouki.

[I’m terribly sorry, Hero-dono. This Usagininzoku seems to know something something about my subordinates that have been missing since 2 months ago, Will you listen to my request? If you need an Usagininzoku woman, I can prepare another for you, this time around.....]

[Oi, underling]

However, a voice interrupted before Grid finished talking. At the same time that Grid glanced towards the voice, his expression cramped up because of anger, there the annoyed looking Hajime was seen.

[What……]

[Don't open your mouth, underling. Your role is already over. Making us stay forever over foolish things. Quit wasting time and guide us quickly]

[Why you little……]

[Can you not understand the meaning of being silent? To us, we don't even have a miniscule amount of time to spend on you. Know your place]

To Hajime's words, Grid's face is dyed completely red because of the hooligan who picked a fight since they didn't want anything to do with him. His eyes became bloodshot in anger. Even then, self-control was something a regiment commander was required to have, with just one wrong line to "God's Apostles" he would definitely be cut from his position, he became silent and the subordinate in the back began to guide them.

Disregarding Grid who was staring at Hajime with bloodshot eyes, Hajime's group left the room as if nothing happened.

Although Kouki's group had slightly cramped cheeks because of Hajime's objection, the females looked refreshed. As for Hajime, there was no intent on being sarcastic……If he knew of that, blood might have gushed out from Grid's blood vessels.

However, it seemed that a “crotch smash” was about to happen if he still didn’t understand because he had called Shia a prostitute……Grid should be happy for himself to have such self discipline.

Hajime’s group didn’t worry about the piercing gaze that came from behind them, the huge suspension bridge was extended and they followed the pale expressioned guide.

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Especially, Nagumo-san! It was definitely you who pulled the strings from behind the scenes! Don't treat others as if they were someone elses problems and stop feeling Shia-san's fluffy usamimi's! Yue-san's also caressing and touching Shia-san's cheeks as well!]

Ririana's lost it! She glares at Hajime with enough power that it seems to create sounds.

It's exactly as she said, Ririana thought it was Hajime's idea in the Imperial capital, and it was also his idea to come to the Imperial castle. Putting it simply, Hajime has been recognized as the leader of the group, the schemes which would normally be considered insane could only be formed from Hajime's mind.

And, Hajime who was being blamed, was unusually gently feeling Shia's usamimi's while she sat on his knee. On the other knee, Yue had both hands from the front and was caressing and touching Shia's cheeks.

[Your voice is too loud, princess. What's the problem? Today, Shia's kinda unstable]

[Unstable…..you say? is she not feeling well somewhere?]

At once Ririana became worried immediately, shes a good person as well.

Shia that receives the glance, though biting her lip to endure something, her expression began to loosen from her ears being felt

and her cheeks being caressed, when she raised her face she showed a smile and said, [I'm fine].

The reason which caused Shia's emotions to become unstable was obviously because of Grid.

However, it was not unstability from fear in particular. It was the opposite. She was restraining her overflowing murderous intent. No matter how you say it, Grid's group was the hateful party that took away a lot of Shia's family. As long as she gets over her trauma, only strong murderous intent flows afterwards.

However, after thinking about their purpose for coming here, she wasn't able to immediately kill him. That's why, she desperately endured it. And, Hajime and Yue who understood this, tried to sooth Shia by indulging her.

For people who don't know of the circumstances, when summed up, the relation of Grid and Shia were spoken, everyones expression became sorrowful, afterwards, Kouki's group naturally resented them for that, and Ririana looked down with a dark expression. For Ririana, the enslavement of Demi-humans were commonsense in the world and allowed, she didn't think it was far too unreasonable although she did feel resentment.

She who judged herself decided that she wasn't qualified to say anything, towards the members that were making angry faces, [It's fine~, really], Shia said with a dazzling smile, they urged the continuation of the story from Hajime.

[And, why did you guys come here? What about your business at the forest? And also, what was up with the masked disturbance last night? It should almost be time for his Majesty, Gaharudo, to call us for a meeting. I want to get our stories straight ahead of time before we meet, so I'd like you to tell me the bare minimum if you would]

[Ma~a, don't be so restless, princess. When night comes, you'll understand everything. We…..want to hurry and wrap things up after all, we stopped for a slight detour…..that should be all that you need to know for now]

[S, such unreasonableness…..I'll know when its night you say, it can't be, do you plan to create another disturbance with masks again? I understand now! Nagumo-san was the one that made Shizuku and them dress in those embarrassing getups!]

[Don't get so excited. You'll grow bald, princess]

[I won't grow bald! Just what are you saying to a lady!]

[……Stress baldness]

[Yue-san!?]

She seemed to realise that Hajime didn't plan on speaking any further, moreover, Ririana who received such impolite treatment, [Even though I'm a princess…..], while being depressed. Right next to her, Shizuku was, [embarrassing getups…..], muttering quietly while being reminded of her dark history.

Afterwards, in the place where Ririana became depressed she explained the situation, apparently his Majesty, Gaharudo, was told of the story about the end of the church and gods who went mad.

However, as expected of their abilities reign supreme principles,

the top of the country is in utilitarianism*basically everyone in the country believes in the system*. Though there seems to have been moderate impact, while fearlessly laughing he declared that the way they did things wouldn't particularly change anyways. In other words, if it's an enemy, they'll be cut down, if you want something, then forcefully take it, the weak must obey the strong! is what he said.

Further more Gaharudo wondered how Ririana traveled to the Empire, he was anxious.

In other words, though he understood the story of the Kingdom being attacked, the amount of time that it took Ririana to reach the empire was far too quick. Though he was saved because the Empire also felt that an immediate conference of cooperation with the Kingdom should be held, it was impossible to arrive at the Empire after only 1 week of the attack.

At the same time, how did the Kingdom manage to drive away the Majinzoku's army, he was considerably interested in their methods.

About the "Pillar of Light" that gave the demonic army forces a fatal blow, rather than talks about the God's, excuses of "Heaven's Judgement" wouldn't cut it for Gaharudo. When it comes to that, naturally, he came to the assumption that someone had a weapon capable of destroying an entire army in one blow. To that truth, as the Emperor of the Hoelscher Empire, and as a person, he wasn't able to overlook it.

If he investigates it, he'll know immediately, Ririana who got permision from Hajime beforehand, especially talked about how troublesome Hajime was.

However, because she thought Hajime was wasn't at the Empire but traveling around in a faraway place, he had actually entered the heart of the Empire and was meddling in Gaharudo's greedy ambitions, then, on the other hand, what kind of movements will Hajime be taking from now on, Ririana was extremely anxious.

……Mainly, in the sense that the Empire gets mysteriously wiped out from the maps.

Therefore, in the place where she would previously wait to meet with Gaharudo, although she couldn't meet with him because of previous events…..Hajime is being evasive and unserious, Ririana was already, [If you're going to do it~ do it seriously~], while her state of mind was slightly neglectful. Surely, being uneasy about her own misgivings, she would never have guessed in her wildest dreams.

From Ririana, to some extent, heard the rooms door being knocked on and the contents of the conference with the empire was heard. It seems that time's run out. While following the guide, Hajime and them are heading for the reception room where Gaharudo is waiting.

Imperial Castle - Later

This is not meant to be a perfect translation, I cannot read japanese characters and this was carefully edited based on translations I got from my Machine Translator. Therefore, there are bound to be errors here and there! At best, this could be considered as an unedited Final Draft towards an Official Translation

When we entered into the room, it was a fairly plain room with little decoration and there was a table large enough to hold about 30 people. On the upper seat of the table sat a man, the Emperor of the Hoelscher Empire, Gaharudo D. Hoelscher, who had a fearless smile while resting his chin on his hand. There are 2 people behind him, they had a keen air about them in the sense of “We’re capable” as they stood waiting.

And, although we couldn’t see their figures in the room, there was also 2 more people on the other side of the wall, 4 people in the ceiling, and Hajime also felt 2 people soundlessly outside the closed door they came though. It wasn’t only the 2 behind Gaharudo, the other hidden men seemed to have been considerably skilled as well.

[So, are you Hajime Nagumo?]

When Hajime’s group entered, Ririana also introduced them, while completely skipping the greetings to Kouki who was the hero, Gaharudo released pressure while looking at Hajime with a piercing gaze.

It was pressure from the overpowering man who ruled over several hundred thousands of people who were wild and strong and believed in the nature of power. It was no joke. Ririana who was

also in a royal family voiced a small groan from the stifling pressure, Kouki's group backed away instinctively.

However, from such overpowering pressure, these 5 people, Hajime, Yue, Shia, Teio, and Kaori, were calm. In the first place, even Kaori who had little experience survived from the attack of an immortal monster thats been alive since the ancient times at the [Merujine Undersea Ruins].

So although the Emperor had an overpowering pressure, when compared to the monsters in the great labyrinths, it was nothing more than a soft breeze.

Gaharudo's mouth lifts up more and more in interest when he sees that Hajime's group is unphased, then Hajime answered.

[Yes, I'm Hajime Nagumo. Its an honor to have been known by you, your Majesty the Emperor]

[[[[[!?]]]]]

While placing his hand on his chest and lightly bowing, Kouki's group looked at Hajime with astonishment at his words.

Their eyes opened wide and clearly conveyed, [Who are you!]. Especially Ririana who was shaking in unease. While receiving Gaharudo's overpowering pressure and raising a small groan, though her expression hardly changed, it wasn't able to conceal that she was staring at Hajime with an aghast expression.

Hajime also knows of the TPO*Time, Place, Occasion*. However, he was always just ignoring it.

But, because he had business in the Imperial castle this time, he didn't want to be thrown out because he disrespected the Emperor. Since he shouldn't believe in God anymore, the title of "God's Apostle" is probably not effective anymore. The only way to pass is with the title of Hero. Thats why, he judged that he needed to at least use the bare minimum amount of etiquette. Although the changed person was definitely still Hajime.

[Kukuku…..I never even considered this. What happened to your usual arrogant attitude? N? It's quite different from the cries of a certain princess somewhere?]

However, Gaharudo only makes fun of him while laughing.

Hajime glanced over at Ririana. [Princess~, You, just how much did you unnecessarily talk about, A~a?] Ririana who was receiving Hajime's glance, ~Pui~! looked in another direction. When Gaharudo asked what kind of person Hajime was, she unintentionally yelled and complained a great deal about her treatment.

[…….Ha~a, that's right. hm then, as usual]

[Kuku, then it's fine]

Though they were surprised of Hajime's sudden change, they sat down in order.

Finally after Gaharudo removed his gaze off Hajime, he noticed Yue and them who took up their positions by Hajime and observed them interestingly, his eyes seemed to significantly glance at Shia in particular. Following that, he turned his gaze towards Kouki's group…..he looked at Shizuku who was next to Kouki and a grin appeared on both his lips and eyes.

[Shizuku, it's been a while. Have you finally decided to become my wife?]

[O, oi! Shizuku already declined before!]

Kouki reacted to Gaharudo before Shizuku did. Gaharudo's glances over at Kouki for an instant, then back at Shizuku and started laughing hysterically. Kouki had the "I don't care" attitude but veins were appearing on his forehead.

While sighing at the 2 people, Shizuku had a clarified face and answered.

[I have no intentions to take back my previous words. I'll have to decline your Majesties offer]

[Quite heartless. But, it wouldn't be interesting otherwise. More than the world, allow me to tell you it's good. I await the day when that clarified face is dyed in red from longing for me]

[That day will never come throughout all of eternity. …..Or rather, don't you already have an Empress?]

[What about it? Are you dissatisfied as a concubine? Fumu, there are a variety of problems when you become the legal wife……]

[I didn't mean it that way! You'd place your hands on other woman other than the Empress…..]

[What are you saying? I'm the Emperor? 10 or 20 concubines are normal]

[Gu~……that's right. A, anyways, I will not become his Majesties. Please give up]

[Ma~a, since you won't be returned by God anymore, you'll probably be stuck in this world for a while, I suppose I should take my time to convince you. Kuku, prepare yourself, Shizuku]

It appears that Gaharudo really likes Shizuku. As expected of a greedy Emperor, he won't give up even when he's been refused. His sharp eyes were completely locked onto Shizuku. Though Shizuku looks away with an expression that seemed to hate him from the bottom of her heart, she also seemed to not care at all.

Then, at that time, the direction that Shizuku looked in, by chance, aligned with Hajime's sight. From Hajime's glance at that time, [As expected of the worldly-wise man (laughs)] a color of amusement and interest was clearly included.

The angered Shizuku just used her finger to play with the sugar cubes that were prepared for her tea. Although it wasn't as strong as Hajime's, the sugar cube flew with excellent power, it's aim was accurately flying towards Hajime's hateful face……

However, it wasn't a direct hit, it flew into Hajime's mouth and was caught. ~Mogo Mogo~ Hajime's mouth moved around with

an air of flamboyant pride, after the sweetness of the sugar cube was firmly satisfied, he swallowed it. Shizuku's face was mortifying, however Hajime's was clarified.

When Gaharudo saw her in such a state, he turned his sharp glance back at Hajime. It seemed to convey a variety of things.

[Fu~n, this is quite the interesting situation. ……Hajime Nagumo. Though I have a mountain of questions that I want to ask you, first of all, answer this]

[Ah? what is it…….]

[You, have you already embraced*sex being implied* my Shizuku?]

[[[[Bufu~u--!?]]]]

To Gaharudo who abruptly asked such an unexpected question with an eager expression, several people including Shizuku blew out air.

Even the guards that were waiting behind Gaharudo, [Your Majesty……the first thing you wanted to ask, was that……] with a pained expression. They also seemed to be worldly-wise men.

[Wai-, your Majesty! Just what are you suddenly saying….]

[Shizuku, you remain silent for now. I'll hear it from Hajime Nagumo right now]

Naturally, although Shizuku tried to burst Gaharudo's bubble with a tsukkomi, Gaharudo turned his eyes to Hajime, ignoring it. On the other hand, Hajime had an amazed expression.

[What did you think about to reach that conclusion]

[It appears that Shizuku has the heart to forgive you……Judging from that manner, it's not impossible, so just in case]

[Ha~a, there's no way that would happen]

[……Fumu, that's not a lie right. Then, what do you think of Shizuku?]

To that question, all the glances in the room turned to Hajime. Eyes conveying various meanings from Yue's group and Kouki's group pierced him.

Hajime let out a sigh about why the first question asked by the Emperor after meeting him was about his relationship with Shizuku, anyways he turned his gaze over to Shizuku. Shizuku's expression was supposed to be extremely amusing. Hajime looked at Shizuku who was inclining her neck.

It appears that Shizuku's ears began to slightly redden…..

For the time being, the answer (real intentions) was given.

[……She's like a mother]

[OK, that fight you're looking for, you've won it. Get off the table,

Nagumo-kun]

a young 17-year old girl was being held down, of all the things to say, why was it “She’s like a mother”, is what Shizuku who was still sitting on her seat and was getting up was conveying with hatred in her glare at Hajime. The delicate atmosphere from a while ago had already disappeared. Suzu and Kouki who were next to Shizuku were panicking and desperately tried to hold her down.

[……I didn’t think it would be such a boring answer……ma~a, fine. Shizuku, don’t go accidently falling in love now? Because you’re mine]

[I’ve already said this but, I have no intentions of being his Majesties and I’ve also not fallen for Nagumo-kun! Just stop with the nonsense and get back to the main subject]

[I get it, I get it. Don’t get so angry. An excessive denial will only be taken as a positive one?]

[Nuguu~u……]

Shizuku instinctively tried to raise a groan in objection to Gaharudo but decided to sit down loudly. Suzu calmed her with a wry smile, however for some reason Kouki was glaring at Hajime.

[Hajime Nagumo. You as well, don’t go placing your hands on Shizuku?]

[Be relieved, I don’t have the faintest interest in doing that. Rather, if you're only going to idly chat, I’d like to leave now?]

[Our chit chat was unneeded huh. It’s a talk about a new concubine……or Empress that may appear you know? It even

involves the Empire's future…..ma~a, what I wanted to talk about certainly wasn't about Shizuku. You should already know right? It's about your abnormality]

Gaharudo bought time by starting with Shizuku to observe Hajime, he judged it was the proper time and slowly the entire atmosphere changed. It was different from the playful atmosphere, it was now one filled with ambition, it gave off a radiance of a sharp blade.

Gaharudo cut to the chase and asked the biggest reason for meeting with Hajime's group.

[I've heard about it to some degree from princess Ririana. You're someone who's made it to the end of the great labyrinths and obtained the ability to create artifacts……completely repelled the Majinzoku's army, and was able to travel the distance which would normally take 2 months in less than 2 days, such an artifact. Is it true?]

[Ahh]

[And you have no intentions of sharing those artifacts with neither the Kingdom nor Empire?]

[Ahh]

[Fu~n, one person monopolizing that power…….do you think we'd allow such a thing?]

[Whose permission is required? If I'm not allowed, what exactly are you going to do about it?]

Gaharudo steeled his eyes to Hajime's response.

The Emperor's ambitions increased even more, Ririana began gritting her teeth and was worrying nonstop. The bodyguards behind Gaharudo began to release bloodlust before Gaharudo did. In contrast, the presence of the people who were hiding in the room began to diminish even further. It was exactly like a touch-and-go state.

Towards the tensed air Kouki's group had stiff faces and steeled themselves for battle.

However, Hajime's group completely warded off the breeze-like bloodlust with their own heavy bloodlust which could be felt sticking onto their skins, then calmly reached out for the tea cups. At that instant, he glanced at the locations of where the hiding people's hidden presences were. [Have we been noticed?] they said.

did they notice properly, their presence that could be felt shook slightly.

[Hahaha, stop, stop it. We were completely seen though. This guys a genuine flesh and blood monster. If we fought now, we'd be completely annihilated!]

Gaharudo was laughing hysterically and hid his ambitions. The surrounding people who had dangerous airs also matched it accordingly.

[Why do you look like you're enjoying this so much?]

[Oi, oi, I'm the head of the "Empire" you know? When you meet a strong guy, it'll be a lie to say that your heart doesn't dance around right?]

Kouki's group, although they couldn't understand what was going on, they let out relieved breaths because the atmosphere was less tense, Hajime also tsukkomied the unusually happy Gaharudo. Gaharudo's answer was definitely one of those who believe in the abilities reign supreme policy.

[Even so, those women you've got there are quite outrageous. Oi, where did you find them? For there to be women of this caliber, I want to ask you a request directly…..allow me to have one of them, Hajime Nagumo]

[Don't say such foolish things. You're in over your head…..no, it might be fine if it's Teio]

[~!? Wh, what did you……say, master casually wants to sell mistress to another man! Haa~ Haa~, being treated so…..I can't get enough of it. Haa~ Haa~]

[There's a slight problem, though she's a great woman appearance-wise]

[Sorry, even the Emperor has his limits. As expected, a girl dripping with pervertedness is too much]

[Th, this guy, to say it right in front of the person being talked about! Kuu~uu, N~, N~, surely, after this I'll be forcefully taken by his Majesty, messing up mistress right before master's eyes….Haa~ Haa~.....N~~.....I need to change my underwear]

Even Gaharudo and them could only stare dumbfounded at Teio's

strangely refreshing expression. Then they turned their gaze to Hajime who traveled with such a perverted woman. Gaharudo changed the mood by clearing his throat.

[As for me, I'm quite more interested in that Usagininzoku there? I've never seen an Usagininzoku with that kind of hair before and she completely disregarded my bloodlust as well. That mental attitude reminds me of the toy's that I caught a while ago, how about that one?]

Towards Gaharudo's word "Toy's", Shia's eye twitched for an instant in reaction. Yue who was next to her, clasped her hand quietly underneath the table.

[Even if you tell me about your toys…..]

[You can't think of anything, you mean? Do you want to go check them out later? Actually, I still have more(. .)animals, although they're a woman and a child, they're quite------]

[I'm not interested]

Gaharudo's words were a bluff. Through Cam, it's been confirmed that all the people caught were already rescued. He's probably trying to ask baiting questions. Compared to that, Hajime's answer was only a line.

However, Gaharudo's attack wasn't over yet.

[Ho~o, those fellows had special short swords and equipment on the 5-star level, even then you're not interested, Synergist(. . .)?]

[None]

[.....I see. By the way, yesterday, there were some people who managed to break out of the prison in the dungeon, the Imperial castle was easily invaded and they escaped, that kind of thing could only be done with a special artifact's(. .)magic, do you know anything about it?]

[I don't know]

[.....Ha~a.....then it's fine. This is the last question I want to know of.....what do you think of God?]

[I'm not interested]

[Ah~, I get it already. Jeez, you're such an unsocial brat]

Gaharudo was cursing as he scratched his head ~Gari Gari~. However, he still had a somewhat happy expression. He seems to favor the other party who he argued with. From what he soaked in from the exchange, Gaharudo probably guessed Hajime's was connected with the Hauria tribe, he noticed that the prisonbreak was through Hajime's guidance.

And he seemed to understand Hajime's stance on this world's problems from his short answers. At least, it seems like they won't be facing off against Hajime. After all, not being chased out of the Imperial castle is already great evidence.

Then the time came, one of the men waiting in the back quietly whispered into Gaharudo's ear, Gaharudo slowly left his seat.

[Ma~a, I heard the minimum amount that I wanted to hear.....rather, I already understood, so all is well. Ah, that's right.

Tonight, we'll be holding princess Ririana's welcome party. By all means, please attend. It'll also serve as my son and the princess's engagement party. Even though the truth is different, if you didn't know of it, the blessings as a "Hero" or "God's Apostle" would be good. I'm begging you here? Hero's only of form?]

Gaharudo ignored Kouki and their dumbfounded looks when they heard the explosive remarks suddenly dropped into their ears, and provocatively stared at Hajime with a fearless smile, he then gallantly left the room.

The door sounded out in a slam, As a result, Kouki and them regained their composure and quickly questioned Ririana.

[Ririi, what's this about an engagement! Just what exactly happened!]

[That's….for example, besides the mad Gods, if the Majinzoku attacks us then there's no choice but to retaliate. The king of our country has died, the successor is still only 10 years old, it's not enough to steer the country, then, it's necessary to strengthen our relationships with an ally]

[That's why Ririi is getting engaged with the prince?]

[Yes. My partner is the crowned prince. There have always been many discussions about engaging us beforehand. He was practically already my fiance, It's just that it'll be finalized at this party. Exactly because we're shaken up by the devils invasion, is what I mean]

[What about the Kingdom? You don't have to consult this with them?]

[There's already been a majority that consented to it before, so there shouldn't be any objections. To begin with, it was that kind

of story. Besides, right now the most substantial person in the Kingdom is me. Randell is only in form, because mother isn't a person to step up into the front. Therefore, there are no problems. Right now, quick decisions are necessary]

Ririana said with a resolute expression. Kouki's group had their jaws opened, then they closed it with a sour look on their faces.

[……Does Ririi like that person?]

[It's not about liking or disliking. This is to build a connection between countries. It's just that, the crown prince already has many mistresses, the amount of people would cause you to become offended and hurt your stomach*I think?*. My position aside, we cannot balance out if I'm married to the other princes, there's no helping it……]

[Wh, why, how can you be fine with it! Even though you don't like him, to be marrying that kind of man is strange!]

[If you look at it, that may be what it looks like, because I'm a princess from the royal family. Since birth, this was natural]

[Natural you say……even Ririi is a girl. Don't you want to marry someone that you actually like?]

Kouki couldn't understand and yelled, Ririana could only reply back with a troubled smile.

Ririana was certainly a girl. She became especially close friends with the women that came from another world, If it's about Koari and Shizuku's girls talk then, naturally she yearns for a romantic love.

To Ririana who was wryly smiling, Shizuku stopped Kouki who's arguing became increasingly wild. Inside where the delicate atmosphere flowed, Hajime slowly left his seat. And tried to leave the room as if nothing happened. To that, Kouki let out his feelings that had nowhere else to go.

[Oi! Nagumo! Do you think nothing of this!]

[Ha~a? What do you think I can do about the princess's engagement? More so, this is a form of politics taking shape as a marriage? Rather, this isn't something an amateur can even intervene in]

[Gu~, bu, but….]

[More importantly, there are things that we have to do. If you do something rash and end up obstructing us, I'll knock you down flat alright?]

After Hajime said that, Yue and them also quickly left. While calming down the riled up Kouki, depending on the results of what'll happen in the near future, the engagement talk may be scrapped, Shizuku looked up towards the ceiling with some tiredness.

~~~~~~

Hajime and them who exited, after Shizuku's group talked with each other for 2 or 3 stories, they returned to their rooms arranged for them by the attendant maids because Ririana had to prepare for the party at night. For such an occasion, it's mainly dresses.
~~~~~~

[Ma~a, it's wonderful, Ririana-sama!]

[Really……you look exactly like a flower fairy]

[Surely, his royal highness would be pleased a well!]

One of the dress candidates was chosen in the end after trying on dozens of others, to Ririana who turned around in front of the full-length mirror, the entranced blushing maids surrounding her let out compliments. Although shew as only 14-years-old she had an exquisite charm as a woman, combined with the light pink dress only amplified it's effects to the maximum. Just like one of the maids had said, she had the loveliness of a flower spirit.

[That's, right. Shall we go with this. Next is the accessories…..]

Ririana herself seemed to consent with a nod.

No matter how much this was a political marriage, the crown prince was an extreme ladies man who resembled his father, Bias D. Hoelscher, when they met several times in the past, he looked at Ririana with indecent eyes when she still hadn't even reached the age of 10, that scums actual ability wasn't half-baked, he called a lower class knight for "practice" while at the Kingdom to show off his strength as he teased the knight, however the fact that he will become her husband won't change.

As so, Ririana couldn't bring shame to her partner, since it's their engagement party, Ririana intended to dress up to her maximum potential. Shaking away the word "liked person" that Kouki said

from her head.

Ririana was also a woman. She was also popular with many other talented women of the Hairihi Kingdom, so she had yearnings to be a normal girl as well. When she's in a pinch, the prince who she dreamed of would appear, then they'd be attracted to each other from their chanced meeting, she's even dreamt up stories of overcoming multiple obstacles in their reach for love together.

But, it's an impossible future. Because Ririana was intelligent, she accepted that she would be called for on a mission since she was young. That's why, even if she feels repulsed by the other partner from the bottom of her heart, her feelings of wanting to be an excellent wife is true, she was determined to magnificently serve the crowned prince after the party.

Then, at that time, suddenly, the outside of her room became noisy. Ririana's door was flung open without knocking, and a large man without hesitation, rudely entered the room. Though he stopped as the knights of the Imperial guards*the Kingdoms* ran up to Ririana's side, the man didn't particularly care.

[Ho~o, is that the dress for tonight……it's about average I guess]

[…..Bias-sama. Suddenly breaking into a lady's room isn't an admirable act]

[A~a? I'm going to be your husband? why are you talking back at me?]

[…….]

The person warning Ririana with a gloomy expression is, Bias D. Hoelscher, whom she is to be engaged to. The same as several

years ago, he carried a rude tyrannical atmosphere, he continued to look at Ririana from top to bottom indecently. A chill ran through Ririana's spine.

[Oi, everyone leave at once]

Bias with a grin on his lips, suddenly ordered all the maids and knights of the Imperial guard to leave. He ordered again threatenly for those that were puzzled, the maids left the room panickingly. However, the Imperial guards, naturally hesitated. Ririana notices that Bias's eyes were becoming dangerous, unsure of what to do she ordered the guards to stand down.

[Fu~n, when disciplining your dogs, make sure to do it firmly]

[……They are not dogs. They're my important vassals]

[……Rebellious as ever I see? Kuku, still the same brat that hasn't even reached 10 years old, it was worthwhile being glared at with that hateful gaze of yours. At that time, I already decided that you were going to be mine someday]

When he said that, Bias had a disgusting smile on his face while watching Ririana who had stiffened up from the bottom of her heart, suddenly her breasts were grabbed at.

[~!? No~! Ouch!]

[Even still, you've grown up. It's still not enough though, however that in itself is appetizing]

[St, stop]

Towards the violent action, Ririana's expression distorted into pain. When Bias saw the expression, his laughter became much more excited, he then pushed down Ririana onto the ground. Although Ririana was screaming, the Imperial guards outside didn't seem to notice.

[You can cry as much as you want? Because this room has a special mechanism in place, sound cannot reach the outside. Ma~a, even if those dogs entered, they can't do anything against me because I'm the crowned prince. After all, do you want those fellows to see your virginity being taken away? Ku, Hahahaha~]

[Why……this kind of…….]

Ririana became pale when she thought of the things that will be done in the future, she courageously glared at Bias.

[It's those eyes. Those rebellious eyes, painfully, despairing, I want to turn those into eyes of pleasure. Above all else, I love teasing defiant people into submission. People who are struggling desperately, there's no higher pleasure than to have them kneel down and lower their heads. If you taste this pleasure even once, you can't live without it. Ririana. When I first met you who was courageously judging me with your eyes, I thought that I'd want to mess you up at some point]

[People like you……]

[Na~a, Ririana. Rather than after marriage, if you lose your virginity before the engagement party, what kind of face will you have at the party? While enduring the pain from your groin, what kind of expression will you have in front of the people? A~a, I just can't wait to see it]

For example, even if she feels disgust towards the other party, if she properly supports him as a supportive wife, surely, eventually he will become a splendid emperor, No, the heart that Ririana steeled up had already started cracking.

Ririana realised. In front of her was a grinning man who wanted to see the enduring Ririana's tears fall out desperately, in another sense, he was definitely the "Crowned Prince of the Empire".

The dress that she chose in order to not shame Bias, was torn by his hands. The skin of a stainless gem was exposed, Ririana's face blushed in shame. Both of her hands were suppressed above her head, she wasn't able to conceal herself with her legs.

Bias while smirking, possibly attempting to kiss her, his face was slowly coming closer to Ririana. Almost like, Ririana's eyes remained opened wide full of fear. Ririana couldn't turn her face away because her chin was held in place, unknown to herself, tears began to flow from her eyes due to the fear and shame, then she thought.

I prepared myself for the marriage, but as expected it was impossible, this is too much. In reality, she wanted to dedicate her body and heart to the person she liked and wanted to become happy with them. That was her sincere feelings as a woman that leaked out from the concealed armor called a princess.

And, the stories of Kaori and Shizuku were recalled. Appearing at the time of a pinch, attacking and bringing down the unjust, it was said to be rescued from a swamp of danger, exactly like a fairytale

story.

If she prayed for it, would she be saved. Ririana laughed at herself for thinking such foolish thoughts, still, her heart wished for it despite so.

In other words,

-----Save me

Then.

At that moment, Ririana who was pinned down by Bias saw something approaching from behind him, something like a small spider fell from the ceiling! and she witnessed it land. [Eh?] Ririana's eyes opened wide in surprise at what was before her eyes, when the spider took 1 step with its foot, it sanked into Bias's neck! the leg pieced though.

[Ow! What? Just now, my neck…..]

He felt pain running through his neck, Bias who was about to lock lips with Ririana's stopped and felt his neck. At that time, the spider had already retreated back up it's string and onto the ceiling.

Ririana watched the scene in amazement, Bias suddenly became

sluggish and his eyes were starting to shut, immediately after that, he lost consciousness as is, and fell down onto Ririana.

[Eh? Eh?]

In front of the confused Ririana, again, the spider climbed down it's string onto Bias. Bias is currently still covered on top of Ririana, the spider climbed down to his shoulder which was before Ririana's eyes. While staring at it upclose, Ririana noticed a strangeness from the spider for the first time.

[……Metal…..spider?]

Right, the spider that was on Bias's shoulder was made of metal. In front of the popeyed Ririana, the metal spider, [Stop~!], said to it, again, ~Pusu~! a different foot from a while ago was thrust into Bias's neck. Despite already losing his consciousness he shook! Bias started trembling. He was still breathing, so it wasn't meant to be a decisive blow.

Ririana didn't think it's purpose was to actually deliver the final blow though. And, the girl stared quietly at the spider before her eyes. If Ririana looked closer she noticed that the metal spider had a luster like crystal, it crawled up its string and smoothly returned to the ceiling.

[Ah, wait, please wait! By any chance, are you…..]

Although Ririana called out to it confusedly, the metal spider continued on ignoring her, while clinging to the ceiling with its 8

feet, ~Kisa Kisa~ it moved towards the outside wall. Then a slight red light was emitted, it walked out of the room while closing the hole it made through the wall and escaped.

While sitting down, Ririana used the torn dress to cover herself and at last the situation was understood, she muttered to herself while smiling.

[Thank you…..Nagumo-san]

Bias was Ririana's fiance, just now in the place that she was helped, she understood when it patched up the hole. But, still, at this time, having answered her plea for help, she was helplessly glad. She gripped both her hands tightly as she held down the torn dress on her chest, Alternatively, it looked like she was grasping onto something else*I couldn't tell if this was supposed to be a perverted reference or if this was in the meaning of her heart being taken away*.

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middle of it though……60% of the plan was completed]

The voice that answered Yue was slow and was concentrating on something else.

[that's fast. As expected, are there many traps?]

[…..that's right. but, there's no reason to disarm them all]

[Fumu, it's great that there's a party today. If people gather, it's easier to move around in various ways]

[It seems that people have finally begun to gather at the party hall huh. ……Will it go well?]

Shia said with a slightly uneasy expression.

After all, a once-in-a-lifetime great event that'll decide her families futures is on the line. It would be weird if she wasn't tensed. Towards such a Shia, Hajime felt her Usamimi's, Yue caressed her cheeks, Teio was brushing her hair, and Kaori tightly clasped her hand.

To the smiling companions, Shia's feelings began swelling up in her throat.

However, tears did not come down. For instance, even if it were tears of joy, it'll be far to early to be crying when nothings even started yet. In its place, just like always, she smiled her bright smile. I'm not alone. My family is here too. I'm blessed to have them, her smile revealed such thoughts. It was the charm that Hajime and them liked about Shia.

Hajime who confirmed that Shia had smiled, is happy to have such a powerful companion and a smile that resembles a childs mischief grin appeared on his face.

[Now then, shall we prepare the stage for the main characters?]

To those words, Shia, Yue, Teio, and Kaori also had a similar smile and nodded powerfully.

Party of Welcome and Engagement

This is not meant to be a perfect translation, I cannot read japanese characters and this was carefully edited based on translations I got from my Machine Translator. Therefore, there are bound to be errors here and there! At best, this could be considered as an unedited Final Draft towards an Official Translation

The sun has completely fallen, the corners of the Imperial castle become encased in darkness. 2 Empire soldiers were on patrol around the perimeter of the building leading to the dungeon. Some kind of torch-like fire magic was burning brightly in their hands, they're paying a lot of attention towards the darkness in case of intruders.

[Ha~a, the upper brasses party should be around this time……I bet they're eating delicious food….]

[Oi, don't talk about meaningless things. If it's found out, we'll both be held responsible]

The soldiers sigh was mixed in with his grumbling as he looked towards the light of the other soldier further up ahead. Though both of them were frowning, their expression's were due to different reasons. If anything, the atmosphere was like the feeling of "becoming even hotter because you've complained about the heat being hot." In the back of their heads, they both released a complain.

[Though however, you've also woken up early, you'd also want to attend those kinds of things?]

[……Well yeah. though If we were allowed to go, there would be the problem of not having money nor a woman…..]

[Thats right~. After eating and getting drunk at the party, they'll be playing with the ladies until morning? It's like heaven. Ah~, rather than some meaningless patrolling, I want to embrace women~. The Usagininzoku women would be good~]

[You like Usagininzoku women right. Although all the other Demi-human women have nice bodies, the only thing you think about at the brothels are the Usagininzoku]

[That's because those guys are the best out of the bunch when threatening them. They cry out in a good voice]

[That's a rather distasteful hobby…..]

[What are you talking about. Don't you think that the Usagininzoku's just give out a, please tease me, aura? I'm only granting that wish. Even you like to crush countless people down]

[There's no helping it though? They cry out in a good voice]

The 2 patrolling soldiers looked at one another in interest and began laughing out vulgarly.

In the Empire, the fact that Demi-humans were considered tools won't change. In order to release their stress and sexual desires, there were many variety of tools that they could use. Therefore, these 2 are special, not through their sadistic characters though, it could be said that it was commonsense that every Empire soldier had the tendency of liking to shame their partner.

Then, at that time, one of the soldiers gave out a voice and expression as if they saw something unknown in the shadows of the buildings.

[N? …..Oi, just now, something…..]

[Ah? What is it?]

While thrusting out the torch before himself, the soldier was moving towards the buildings shadow. The other soldier also followed along while voicing out his doubt.

The first soldier proceeded to say, [Is anyone there?], but there was a gap in the buildings that was just barely big enough to fit one person! he turned the torch of fire towards it.

However, there wasn't the figure of the shadow he had seen awhile ago, [Did I see wrong……], he muttered as he sighed in relief. Then, he turned around to look at his comrade while smiling wryly……

[My bad, I saw wr-.....? Oi, Maul? Where are you? Maul?]

His comrade was not there, only the torch that he held was on the ground where he was once standing. Where did he go, the soldier looked around restlessly throughout the vicinity, however there wasn't any shadow's of a person. Then he felt a cold sensation running through his spine.

He began to feel fear welling up, the soldier went to pick up the torch that was suddenly fallen on the ground and called out to his comrade in high tension……

[Oi, Maul. Quit joking arou----gu!?]

At that moment, two arms expanded without a sound from the gap in the buildings that no one was at earlier.

A black frosted knife that absorbed even light was being gripped in one of the hands which seemed to have grown out directly from the darkness, simultaneously, one hand covered up the soldiers mouth, and with the other, stabbed him through his medulla oblongata *its a part of your brain*.

In an instant, the soldier's body that was convulsing started relaxing as strength left his body and disappeared into the darkness as it was dragged by the two arms.

And before anyone noticed, the torch that he was trying to pick up had disappeared and nothing was left, only a lukewarm evening wind blowing softly.

A small whisper can be heard from the wind in the darkness.

[HQ, this is Alpha. Suppression of Point C is complete]

[Alpha, this is HQ. Roger that. Move towards Point E. There are 4 sentinels. Sneak around from the East]

[HQ, this is Alpha. Roger that]

After whispering that, two or more people wrapped in black clothes from head to toe, starts moving one after the other.

Though they tightly concealed their faces with a black cloth, only their eyes were clear so that they could see, a sharp gaze was peeping out from there, in addition, they had two small swords bundled on their backs. If they were seen by a Japanese person they would probably say, [Ah~, a Ninja!].

But, even if you can't identify the specific individual, unfortunately their true identities could easily be seen though. That's because overhead of the covers you could see 2 grown Usamimi's standing tall. No matter how you looked at it they were clearly Usagininzoku, the Hauria tribe.

They were concealing themselves under the darkness and shadows of buildings. they quietly peeped their face through there and saw the reported 4 sentinels which were broken into 2 pairs. A hand signal is sent towards the 3 people who were behind the Haura tribe member that called HQ a while ago.

The 3 people nodded in unison and slipped back, they disappeared into the dark as if they melted completely.

After waiting for a few seconds. From the place that was pointed to, ~Chika~ one of the sentinel's glances deviated! and lights twinkled. Similarly, they didn't actually enter the sentinel's view, one of the Hauria opened a lid of a lighter-sized container for in an

instant. This had a Green Light Stone inside which imitated a flashlight.

The Hauria which saw the signal began to move while issuing orders with hand signals towards the 2 behind him.

The moment the 2 sentinels were out of eachothers eyesights, they lowered their presence to the limit and quickly approached, one person covers the soldiers mouth and nose while the other stabbed him through his medulla oblongata, another also thrusts through the other soldier's kidney while restraining him with one hand similarly and knocking him down to the ground.

The last person was taking the torches that the sentinels dropped and put out its fire and confirmed that there are no traces left. Then they dragged the bodies into the shadows of the buildings quickly.

However, as expected due to the long silence from the other pair, the 2 sentinels, [N?], turned their glance.

The appearance of their comrades which they glanced at earlier were no longer there. There's not even light from the torch, only darkness. [Where did those guys go?], the sentinels looked hard with doubtful expressions, they managed to see a shadow that moved faintly in the darkness. It was the figure of something big being dragged.

[Anyway, this is bad!], the sentinel stretched out his hand to reach the alarm whistle which hung on his neck……

In the next instant, a knife was stabbed into the sentinel's neck, there was no time to scream nor time to feel pain, his consciousness drifted into eternal darkness.

Next to the sentinel which held his whistle, similarly was his comrade who was also stabbed by a knife and dead. At the same time, the torches were put out and they dragged the bodies into the shadows of the building.

Presently, similar slaughters were being carried out everywhere at the Imperial castle.

A lot of stationed soldiers which were in pairs of two or more have already experienced an eternal separation from their bodies, soldiers who were sleeping in the barracks were drugged with sleeping pills made in the Sea of Trees which put them into a deep slumber. Even if the alarm was sounded, they'll still be sleeping until morning and there fatigue would be fully relieved.

A crescent moon is now floating in the evening sky.

It's other name was "The 2nd Moon", where it was so thin that you can kinda see it but kinda not as well. *I don't think I got this part correct at all lol, 別名"二日月"と呼ばれる新月の翌日に昇る見えるか見えないかくらいの極細の月だ*

It was exactly like the smile of demon.

The people who praised the principle that strength reigned supreme and cursed the weak, seemed to be completely laughed at under the moon.

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officers had conceited personalities because of the principles they believed in, the civil officers stood in relief and realized that the military officers were of a higher standing.

Hajime's voice was heard positively speaking with those military officers.

After all, he was "God's Apostle" and in the "Hero's Group". To general people he was a strong man who participated in the capturing of [Orcus Great Labyrinth], an indispensable force for the world, "Strength" was likely the standard existence which interested them all. Of course there were also secret desires to create good personal connections with him as well.

To begin with, presently, the people talking to Haime that had no ulterior motives and interests seemed to show more interests in the pretty women which stood by his side and never left it since the party started. it was obvious since their glances were always briefly turned towards Yue and them who waited behind Hajime as they talked with him.

But, it wasn't completely unreasonable. The party was to welcome princess Ririana as well as her engagement party, Yue and their existences were rather than an uproar of decorated flowers being on display, it was more of the sense of being the leading role of the hall.

Shia wore a moonlight colored miniskirt dress which exposed her slender and beautiful legs.

However, it wasn't vulgar, from the skirt extending softly, it created a unique atmosphere which empowered all of Shia's loveliness. It also matched her beautiful straight hair which hung straight down, those factors were probably what gave her so much cuteness and elegance.

Next to her, Teio who was elegantly tilting her wine, wore a black long dress which was similar to her usual black kimono. However, because the dress was the type to show her bodylines, she had an intense bodyline without any irregularities, furthermore, because the back and her chest opened up greatly, it revealed her beautiful hills which could not be called anything but stunning as it was likely to spill out at anytime. The eyesights of the men at the hall would always glance towards it every now and then! They were attracted towards the lethal weapons, one after another their women partners gave them all glances of disgust.

Kaori was dressed in a slender line dress which completely exposed her shoulders. Although her bodyline wasn't as intense as Teio's, it's ballance was definitely molded by God. Her beautiful legs momentarily peeped out through the skirt which had a deep slit like the Chinese dresses called the Qipao, along with the brightness of her silver hair, it caused her sex appeal to show and eyes unintentionally turned towards her.

And, Hajime's favorite, his beloved blood sucking princess------wore a pure-white wedding dress(modoki *i dono what this is supposed to mean but its in parentheses, モドキ*).

The cloth was lustrous, her shoulders were exposed, and her skirt's hem was ruffled with frills which expanded out greatly. Her hair was in a ponytail with an elegant white flower ornament to hold it in place. Her exposure was-----few in number, it was her glossy

white neck, her lips of red rouge which attracted much attention, and her eyes which were slightly moistened had conceived heat which provoked men's desires helplessly. As usual, Yue's charms came from the gap of her childish appearance and her bewitching atmosphere which was enhanced several times over.

Inside of the room, Hajime and the other men were waiting for Yue and them to finish changing but, the moment when they entered, it was unavoidable that they were taken in by the overflowing charm and became completely stiff.

Especially, Hajime whose eyes were completely nailed down to Yue, anyone who saw it would notice that his heart was completely taken away. Yue as well probably understood it. She stared straight back at Hajime with a joyful smile.

Although the other females became angry at Hajime for not glancing at them and was about to start complaining to him, Hajime moved faster and forcefully embraced Yue closely and gave her a deep kiss, now the males without female relationships stiffened up for a different reason, afterwards, they began to tear apart Hajime and Yue who were remaining together forever by force which was also later known as the "Hajime's reasoning was blown away incident".....

Anyways, [Do you understand who's engagement party this is? Ne~e? Do you know?], they began tsukkomi'ing Yue and them who took away the show.

By the way, Shizuku and Suzu was also dressed up, although they were gorgeous enough to not lose to the daughters of the Empire nobles……as expected, they weren't at the level of taking away

Hajime's heart like Yue and them, rather they had no strong motive to do so in the first place, to begin with they gave out less of an impression when compared with Yue and them's mature impressions.

[Even still, Nagumo-dono's companions are all beautiful ones]

[That's damn right. I'd like to take one of them to keep me company for the dance after this]

------HQ, this is Delta. Blast preparation points are all prepared.

------HQ, this is India. Suppression of Point M is complete.

To the half-serious words of the Empire nobles, Hajime exchanges a smile with them as he hears the report from telepathy which reached his ears, the entrance to the hall became increasingly noisy. It appears that it was time for the appearance of princess Ririana and his Highness Bias to take the leading role. A civil officer-like man conveyed the appearance of the two people in a loud voice.

Zawa~.....

Ririana's figure in a dress emerged from the door which was exaggeratedly opened, people in the hall raised out voices mixed with surprise and perplexity.

It was because Ririana wore a jet black dress which seemed to breath in all the lights. Normally, if you consider Ririana's figure

and the outline of the engagement party, a brighter dress would be much more suitable. Towards that fact, [I'm here out of obligation], kind of feeling along with a cleansed face, the jet black dress looked like a wall that Ririana had put on.

Her partner, his Highness Bias as well, with a slightly sour expression as if having crushed a bug, no matter how you looked at it, this was not the scene of a happily married couple, for the time being the hall started being filled with applause, it was a very delicate atmosphere.

As is, those 2 went up to the platform.

the Chairman person allowed the party to progress even though it was puzzling. Looking at Ririana and Bias's states, even now Gaharudo was about to explode out laughing while greeting them, music began to flow into the hall. It was time for the greetings circle to dance with Ririana and the others. Elegant music resounded in the hall which wiped out the delicate atmosphere.

At the center of the hall, Men who took out their flowers began to dance freely. Although it was completely mechanical, Bias and Ririana also danced. Mainly, Ririana's expression was due to the atmosphere.

Even if Bias draws closer forcefully, a slight distance was noticed in regards to the melody. As it was, one piece of music finally finished, Ririana quickly advanced onto the next person in the greetings circle.

Bias had an irritated expression, however, he needed to continue on with the greetings circle. In a state that seemed to subtly care about his groin. Actually, after just having woken up a few minutes ago, he did not have time to confronted Ririana what had happened before the start of the party and no one else knew. For some unknown reason his son was blocked out from reviving (the appearance of the person that revives), feeling impatient and irritated of the situation he could do nothing but follow Ririana, as no one else knew.

------HQ, this is Romeo. Suppression of Point P is complete.

------HQ, this is Tango. Suppression of Point R is complete.

[How do I say this, that not like Riri at all. Usually she'd hide her real intentions…..]

Kaori muttered as she saw Ririana exchanging greetings indifferently without a smile.

[…….Ma~a, Those kinds of things are impossible huh. The princess must also have a lot of things to think about]

[…..Many things?]

Yue and them became puzzled at Hajime's words.

[Nagumo-kun, did something happen to Riri?]

[Oi, Yaegashi. What do you mean by that, come on]

Shizuku was in a wine-red long dress and looked at Hajime suspiciously.

[Because, Riri's showing that kind of attitude in a public place…..if something insane happened then, it's roughly Nagumo-kun's fault right? That's been the rule for all the times up till now. In fact, you seem like you know something]

[Chi, that's hard to refute…..but, this time I've really done nothing. Just that, as I was passing by I helped out the Princess who was about to be raped by the crowned prince]

[Right, Riri was being ra-.....what was that?]

[Wait a second, Hajime-kun!? Just now what did you!?]

Led by Shizuku and Kaori, everyone turns a surprised look towards Hajime.

Since the dance started a lot of troublesome men have come to ask Yue and them for a dance, although Yue and them had no intentions of dancing with any other man other than Hajime, presently, they've all been driven away by Hajime's "Pressure", so only Yue and them as well as Shizuku was around.

Kouki was forcibly taken out by the ladies and was dancing desperately as he wasn't accustomed to it, while Ryutaro was single-mindedly eating. Suzu was dancing with a dandy*lol didn't notice I spelt that wrong, thanks Schion93* old man in a, [Ho～ee] kind of feeling.

Therefore, the only people who heard about Ririana almost being raped by Bias was Yue and them. Unexpectedly, Kaori and Shizuku demanded with lots of momentum for an explanation from Hajime, attention started to gather around.

[Ah~, yes, that's why……Yue, do you want to dance once?]

[N~.....I'd be pleased]

[Ah, wait a second, Nagumo-kun! Don't run away just because it's become troublesome! Explain it properly to us!]

[Th, that's right! It's an important matter! Properly explain it!]

According to Shizuku's words, Hajime who thought that an explanation would be too troublesome, took Yue's hand and planned to escape onto the dance hall. In another sense, the attention was focused on the girl with a pretty face which resembled a work of art much more remarkable than Ririana who was the leading role and on the boy who was her partner (Tuxedo Ver.) with white hair and an eye patch.

Normally, in order to match Yue who was accustomed to royal dances and was leading, Hajime decided to use "Light Speed" while dancing. Since the dance was being observed, he wanted to look good. Joyfully, Yue's expression was that of someone who was filled with happiness, and Hajime's eyes were softening towards that, combined with their clothes and looking from the sides, it was completely an engagement party for those two.

Although the musicians somewhere desperately tried to heat up the place as it became awkward, they used Hajime and Yue's atmosphere to begin playing joyfully. By now, the leading role in the hall is Hajime and Yue, everyone paid attention to the two that

were dancing round and round happily.

Towards such people, Ririana watched them with a smile. In there laid some color of envy as well.

On one hand, there was a group of women yearning for Hajime, and more may appear in the future, Ririana temporarily pushed the events that just happened into the corner of her head, [Who's next!?], it became a battle for the second person.

The performance would be ending soon, Grand applause was presented towards the two people who were kissing with each other lightly as the aristocrats of the Empire were watching with smiles. In their eyes, pure feelings of admiration and praise were seen. The daughters of the noblemen as well, [Ho～u], absentmindedly leaked out hot sighs.

Hajime and Yue gracefully bowed in return towards the applause and returned to their friends while holding hands. Apparently Teio won the competition and gets the next dance, she looked towards Hajime with eyes of expectation.

However, Teio's expectation was easily betrayed.

[Nagumo Hajime-sama, would you please accompany me for one dance?]

Right, it was because another person had already called out to him.

The other person was Ririana.

[Princess….for the leading role to be separating from their partner, what happened suddenly?]

[Ara, that leading role was just deprived of her seat, so aren't those words rather cruel?]

[Isn't it because you've got that work face on? Actually, is it alright to leave the crowned prince alone?]

[If it's about the greetings circle it's practically finished already, now is the time to enjoy the party. In the first place we're supposed to dance with several people. Look, the crowned prince is also dancing with one of his mistresses]

[A mistress…..you don't look concerned at all huh]

[Fufu. Rather than that, I'd like you to take my hand soon….can you not dance?]

Hajime noticed that Ririana didn't only want to dance but also say something, he could roughly guess what it was she wanted to talk about, with a, what should I do, he scratched his cheek. To be honest, he wanted to keep bathing in the afterglow of dancing with Yue……

Then, towards the hesitating Hajime, Yue who was next to him said, [Meh!]. It seemed she said that to convey to not disgrace Ririana at a public place. Yue understood that Hajime couldn't decide on what to do so the, [Meh!], that was said to decide things for him.

[Ah~, I get it. …..I would be happy to be your partner, Princess]

[…..Yes]

Had they attracted attention, there was an unusual action of Hajime respectfully taking Ririana's hand and led her towards the center of the dance hall. Previously, the dance with Yue was still probably within their minds. Ririana has a slightly ashamed attitude and the degree of attention towards that is high.

By the way, during the interactions with Ririana, nobody cared about Teio who hardened up as her hand was held out for a long time. [Th, this timing, so it's come! Whatever you do, I understand master! Haa~ Haa~…..N~], with reddened and blushed cheeks, nobody bothered to tsukkomi.

The melody of music began to flow out calmly. Ririana and Hajime were sticking close to one another as their bodies shook waveringly gracefully. Ririana whispered quietly while her face drawn close to his shoulder.

[……Thank you very much for a little while ago]

[As I thought, it was that…….so you know]

[Such an insane situation, it couldn't be anyone but you right? Besides, your "Deep Red" is very beautiful……I wouldn't mistake that]

[Is that so? Ma~a, the first prince of the Empire is also stuck with that, it's only a temporary measure though*Thanks The_Codfish, I thought it sounded odd lol*. Sooner or later]

[You're just saying it blatantly huh. …..But, even if it was just an

example I was glad. I heard from Kaori about when you saved them, I longed for that a little bit]

She said as she separated from Hajime's shoulder with a little smile on her face. That smile was Ririana's original charm which couldn't be compared to with the one seen with Bias a while ago, the surrounding aristocrats which were paying attention became slightly noisy when they noticed.

[And, are various things settled about your attitude in that dress?]

[Does it not match me?]

[It suits you. But, as expected that pink dress would have suited you more. Did you plan on insinuating*hint that something bad had happened* them to reveal the truth?]

[Yes, because this degree is enough for a husband who assaults his wife……more so…..as expected you saw everything through that spider huh. …..My improper appearance….a~a, I'm not fit to be a bride anymore]

Yoyoyo~! then, towards Ririana who buried her face onto Hajime's shoulder again while pretending to break down, [What are you talking about….], Hajime looked at her with a ridiculous expression.

[Despite saying it in a low voice, don't say such seldom remarks in such a place. Or rather, haven't you been making too much contact since a while ago? The crowned prince has quite the incredible expression?]

[It's fine isn't it. Once this night ends I'll be the crown princess. Just for now, allow me to be just a girl. Also, I'll be assaulted one

day, can't you succumb to the selfishness of a pitiful bullied princess for a little while?]

[Being assaulted, it's not set that you'll be bullied……]

[It's already a fact]

There Ririana, while hiding her expression by clinging onto Hajime tightly, suddenly muttered something as if on accident.

[……If…….if, I said "Help" what would you do?]

Ririana herself didn't plan on hearing about these things. It was necessary to put a conclusion to the matrimonial relationship between the prince of the Empire for the future. Both countries took damage from the surprise attacks from the demons that the Majinzoku brought, it was necessary to show strength of unity as humans to stabilize things now that the head church temple had disappeared. As someone from the royal family, she should take on that role. For example, even if a painful marriage life filled with the lost of her dignity awaits her.

But still asking Hajime of such things, her voice trembled with fear from the bottom of her heart in the case of the help that she was expecting for doesn't come, having seen Yue look so happy while being embraced by Hajime, she thought that surely Hajime would say, "I refuse". And she steeled herself for that possibility. It was because she thought that it would be fine for her to be selfish for this one time.

But, Hajime's answer was completely off from what she expected.

[Ma~a, before I accompany you, you'll be saved regardless? In this case, the Empire(. . .) may be ending tonight……at the very least, the crowned prince would be hopeless]

[.....Yes?*more of a, what?, sense*]

------HQ, this is Victor. Suppression of Point S is complete.

------HQ, this is X-Ray*thanks Dim1 that does sound right lol, イクスレイ*. Suppression of Point Y is complete.

Towards Ririana who instinctively looks up, Hajime's mouth lifts up into a grin.

His expression was seen and a bad feeling surged into Ririana's mind. There wasn't a touching atmosphere like a while ago, Ririana felt her cheeks cramping up. Hajime quietly drew his mouth close to Ririana's ear.

[And also, I'll make it so that you can understand easier. I'm insensitive, so I might end up doing something carelessly]

[~.....]

Ririana's body shook with a shock. Though there was the breath and voice coming down onto her ear, it's because she understood what Hajime was implying.

In other words, "I'll Help you". Ririana's heart was shaken

intensely. The princess within Ririana began to shout. This marriage is an obligation that should be fulfilled. That's why, I wanted you to cast away that girl who held onto those dreams in one strike.Then.

[Why?], in another sense acting upon cruel treatment, or perhaps it was due to her joy that her eyes moistened up towards Hajime, Hajime acted as if it was nothing, in another sense, he replied without reading the atmosphere and gave the worst response possible.

[The Princess is unfortunate, to be feeling bad for those guys]

Hajime said so and glanced over towards Kaori and them. In brief, their purpose was not exactly for Ririana's sake, although Hajime said, Ririana was unfortunate, he seemed to also imply don't hurt my "Important" people*This line was quite shaky for me, it was either this or he was being a tsundere, or he was implying that she wasn't important?*. Ririana guessed so and stared at Hajime.

[Isn't that, too much of a lie even if it's coming from you? We'll, surely fall?]

[What are you going do if it happens? Ma~a, for the time being, it's just necessary to think that the worst outcome that you've thought of won't be happening. As long as you're important friends of these fellows, that is]

[.....Nagumo-san's resolution doesn't shake huh……..truly, I'm envious of Yue-san]

Ririana watches Hajime with a hateful expression. Hajime was

indifferent towards it and glanced right back. Then finally the end of the music was coming up. Hajime looked unfazed, Ririana who eventually gave up, [Fuu~], breathed outwards and leaned her body onto Hajime, she decided to at least momentarily enjoy the dance for now.

And while leaving a lingering sound, the music stopped, Ririana reluctantly parted her body away, and for a while kept their hands held together while quietly staring at Hajime……[Thank you] she muttered. With a lovely smile just like a flower that was fully bloomed.

It was simply the smile of a 14-year-old girl. A smile that was so pure that it didn't have any impurities, it pierced through all the hearts of the people who saw it. A sigh filled with heat could be heard somewhere. And, after a while, a grand applause which didn't lose against Yue's dance from a while ago resounded. It appears that Ririana only danced with the other people simply because it was required, Hajime separated from her and returned alone, and the eyes of ladies greeted him.

[Hajime-kun's a woman killer…..]

[…….Hajime-san, when on earth did you……I can't let down my guard at all]

[No~o, Master. I got a little wet from the neglecting play, is it alright for me to change my underwear?]

[This has to do with those assault remarks from a while ago right. …..You said something about helping out Riri during a dangerous time, did you plan on dealing the finishing blows during the dance? Ne~e, what exactly did you whisper to her? To begin with, isn't Riri a married woman now? Do you understand? Ne~e, do you understand? Nagumo-kun?]

[Hawawa, Nagumo-kun, finally you've obtained the NETORI*taking another person's lover* attribute…….you're too much of an adult. You've well exceeded Suzu's capacity]

A number of perverted remarks were mixed in, equally, towards the female group that was bad mouthing him and Ririana, [What are you talking about], he said with an amazed expression.

Hajime began talking, he helped out while he was passing by, then danced only because it was requested of him. Afterwards, because Kaori and them would be concerned, he only informed them the minimum amount about how he helped.

There was no intentions of persuading them in any way. And if by chance, to the hundredth millionth decimal, that Ririana fell in love with Hajime, Hajime himself gave off a [Like I care?] feeling.

For now, just to be sure, he turned his gaze towards Yue to not misunderstand it, Yue understood and gripped onto Hajime's hand in assent while nodding her head, as expected Yue was different from them, his love for Yue knew no bounds and rose way beyond the universe. It must have been his imagination that her grip was stronger than usual.

------HQ, this is Zulu. Suppression of Point Z is complete

------Notify the entire force, this is HQ, all arrangements have been completed. Start the countdown.

Shia's expression stiffened up a little as she heard the

communication. Kaori had a slightly tensed expression as well. Shizuku and them who were not given the Telepathy stone (Improved Ver.), only looked at the 2 with suspicious expressions. Moreover, Gaharudo often went up onto the platform on a daily bases and kept glancing towards Hajime and them. This time it appears that he was going to give out a speech and a toast in celebration.

[Now then, first of all, let me express our gratitude for having joined us on this party which serves as a celebration for Princess Ririana visiting our country as well as being engaged with my son. There were many various surprises and it indeed became an interesting event]

Then Gaharudo turned a meaningful glance towards Hajime. Hajime was pretending to not know. Gaharudo's expression seems to convey that it's become even more interesting.

At the same time, a resolute voice was heard from Hajime's telepathy stone.

------To all troops. This is Alpha One. From this point on we will put an end to this persecution we've suffered through for hundreds of years, we will carve our names into the history of this world. Our name will be used as the pronunciation of fear. This place is the intersection of fate. Will we fall into hell or advance towards the future, everything depends on this one battle. There's no need to hold back. Sa~a, we'll show them just how weak our claws and fangs are

------10, 9, 8…….

------Boss. For leading us into this battle, we deeply appreciate it.

Hajime and them heard the Usagininzoku's countdown which concerned their fates.

The aristocrats of the Empire doesn't suspect a thing.

the speeches of the 2 different races overlapped with one another.

[The party has only just begun. Tonight, eat a lot, drink a lot, and dance as much as your heart pleases. It will become the best blessings for my son and daughter-in-law. Sa～a, raise your cups!]

As Gaharudo confirmed that everyone in the hall held up their cups, he poured himself wine to the very brim of his cup. And, with his breath taking initiative with a ～Suu～ breathing in with ambition.

The other side of the telepathy also, once again similarly.

------Get fired up! Let's go!!!

------[[[[[[[[[[Ou～!!!]]]]]]]]]]

------4, 3, 2, 1…….

And, the countdown has finally----

[The unity of humanity will become stronger with this marriage! There is nothing to fear! We are the glorious Human race!]

[[[[[[[[[For Glory!!]]]]]]]]]

------0. I wish you great fortune in war.

At that moment.

All lights vanished and the hall was swallowed by darkness.

Hauria VS. Emperor -First Part-

This is not meant to be a perfect translation, I cannot read japanese characters and this was carefully edited based on translations I got from my Machine Translator. Therefore, there are bound to be errors here and there! At best, this could be considered as an unedited Final Draft towards an Official Translation

[What!? What happened!?]

[Iya～a!? What's with this!?]

The aristocrats of the Empire who were suddenly deprived of one of their senses shouted out angrily in a shaky voice which contained confusion and unrest.

[Don't panic! Use magic to create ligh-ga～a!?]

[What's wron-gya～!?]

[What happen-gu～!?]

A relatively calm person tried to create a sphere of light while giving out instructions to others to secure their vision. However, the sound of a scream and something falling down happened right afterwards. At the same time, the confused aristocrats all begin screaming one after another.

The place soon sanked into confusion once again. Especially, the mademoiselles who completely fell into panic and began running around blindly, the sounds of collisions and people falling resounded out rapidly from various places.

[Calm down! Can you bastards still call yourselves soldier's of the Empire!]

Gaharudo's voice filled with ambition resounded throughout the hall in the darkness. With the loud scolding voice, the aristocrats who started falling into panic and screaming due to the darkness stopped.

However……

Hyu! Hyu! Hyu!

[~!? Chi! Sneaking around so annoyingly!]

Countless arrows came flying towards Gaharudo from the darkness.

With short notice, a surprise attack of arrows which held amazing speed and power attacked Gaharudo from all directions. Moreover, it was pulled off with exquisite timing, being bombarded with arrows which were incredibly accurate was definitely a bad position to be in, with so much flying towards him Gaharudo had no choice but be pushed into a one-sided defensive battle. He couldn't afford to give out instructions to recover the situation anymore.

Still in the pitch black darkness, while fending the blows with the

ceremonial sword, he could only grasp where the arrows were coming from due to the noise of them cutting through the air. The noise surrounding Gaharudo began raising out roars. Gin! Gin! Gin! The sound of metal colliding resounded out.

The sounds of peoples screams resounded one after the other while collapsing, due to Gaharudo's scolding, people who regained their calm created fireballs to act as a light.

They called out to the guards loudly while looking around their surroundings with a fierce expression.

Something like a black shadow zinged by in the edge of their sights! It traveled quickly as if slicing through the wind.

[~!? Who are y-ggebu!?]

Immediately the aristocrat man tried to shoot a fireball towards the shadow.

However, the shadow that dashed out from the darkness dressed in black (+Usamimis) immediately pulled out a small black sword which completely blended in with the darkness, as if it was a joke, a head was mown down instantly.

~Pon~ the head flew through the air and rolled around on the ground with the vivid sounds. The head had a blank face, it seems he didn't notice that he was no longer connected with his body.

Before anyone noticed, all fireballs which were illuminating the surroundings had disappeared and the only color left was the darkness.

The aristocrats and mademoiselles gathered towards the people who created fireballs like moths being provoked by the light, they managed to catch a glimpse of the shadow's Usamimis immediately before the fireball was extinguished, then the spectacle of the persons head flying through the air was witnessed immediately afterwards. Then once again, their waists gave out against the assailant who disappeared under the cover of the darkness.

[Hi~, m, monster~!]

[I, I don't want to die~, someone, anyone!]

Most of the people unable to stand up were the mademoiselle and civil officers, quite a few of the military officers as well too. Their minds couldn't endure the darkness which was equivalent to the death god's sickle and the assailant's existence which appeared right in front of their eyes.

As such, without exception, without being able to do anything, and while doing nothing, the tendons in their hands and feet were cut by the person dressed in black soundlessly, they fell laying on the ground writhing in pain.

Although there were those pathetically miserable people, as a military nation which adheres to the principles that abilities reigned supreme, some couldn't permit themselves to continue

wailing away in confusion forever. Veterans who survived countless battles, although they didn't have a sword like Gaharudo, relied on their daggers which they kept in their breast pocket for self defense, they united with their companions and began creating a battle formation.

while back to back with one another, the magicians were placed in the center. It was splendid cooperation.

The people who were relatively nearby to Gaharudo immediately created a battle formation to defend his back. The range that Gaharudo had to consider was immediately decreased by half, now the attacks were no longer a problem. Gaharudo began chanting while knocking down dozens of arrows to the side.

A bit less than 10 fireballs were produced in an instant and shot out at surprising speeds. They spread out throughout the hall and began to brighten up the darkness.

Begin the counter attack! Though it was Gaharudo yelling out threateningly, immediately afterwards, a lump of metal rolled around in front of him.

[What? Is this……]

The man who serves as Gaharudo's aid moved in closer to check out the objects purpose with suspicion. It wasn't only him though, others who secured their lightsource at different areas were the same.

Gaharudo had an severely unpleasant premonition, he immediately yelled out in a controlling voice

[Stop! Don't get clos-!?]

[~!?]

Although the aid who heard Gaharudo's words reflectively tried to leap back but, that action was meaningless judging by the effects of the lump of metal. That was proven in the next instant.

Ka!

Kyiiiiiin!!

All of the sudden, just when you thought the lump of metal popped, intense light surged out and an immense sound indiscriminately violated the surroundings.

[Gua~a!?]

[Guu~u!]

[What is!?]

The moment the light bursted out, Gaharudo shut his eyes and covered his face with his arms, he wasn't able to completely block out the surprise attack, although his eyes were shut tight he still couldn't see temporarily, he also lost his hearing due to the severe

ringing in his ears as well.

And, the Hauria assailants couldn't overlook this golden opportunity.

The Hauria's dressed in black rushed forwards with exquisite timing and immediately came within the targets bosom while they killed off their presence. Then with one spark from the small jet black sword, a second spark emitted again.

With 2 of their senses taken away from them, the tendons in the officers hands and feet were easily cut without any kind of resistance.

The aides screamed in pain as they fell and laid on the ground.

Immediately, their tongues were torn through by a knife. The purpose was to restrict them from chanting. Several people prostrated themselves in the same manner in various places, bleeding on the ground with the tendons in their hands and feet cut and from their mouths. People who tried to fire off big magics were mercilessly beheaded.

Meanwhile, ~Gin Gin Gin~! the sound of metal clashing resounded out. Surprising it was Gaharudo who had lost his sight and hearing, he was able to slash back at the two Haruia tribe members who killed off their presence to the utmost limit.

The two Haura members which were attacking opened their eyes wide in surprise from this demonstration.

Did he feel their unrest in that instant, taking advantage and with fighting spirit, Gaharudo generated a shock wave by using Quake Legs.

[～!?]

[Ku～!?]

The 2 haruia whose stance was broken instinctively let out a groan. And Gaharudo accurately sliced sideways towards the side of the 2 people as if his eyes and ears weren't damaged at all.

[Scatter and disperse! "Wind Wall"!]

The two haruia members were pushed aside by the sword's destructive power as they were just barely able to receive the attack with their small swords, a terrific barrage of arrows were shot at Gaharudo and with the wall of wind which only took 2 words to cast, all of the arrows trajectory was easily averted.

[Shoot out! "Flame Bullet"!]

The magic was once again duplicated. 10 "Flame Bullets" were produced which were stronger than the "Fire Balls" from before. It shot back towards the trajectory at which the arrows had

originated from when in contact with the “Wind Wall”.

They shuddered from the abnormal presence of Gaharudo who shout out countless magic with power and speed. The Hauria who had hidden their presence unintentionally leaked out their presences slightly.

Gaharudo’s closed eyelids opened up slightly, although he shouldn’t be able to see yet, his eyes carried the light of a dangerous wild beast. And with a grin! he turned his neck and glanced accurately at the direction where the Hauria were in the darkness. He had felt the presence that leaked out a while ago.

[Oooo～o! Burst out, “Flame Bullet”!]

While turning his back against the Flame Bullets he shot out, Gaharudo rushed straight towards the Hauria in the darkness and chanted once again. Immediately, the flame bullet in the back flew towards the ceiling of the party hall and exploded loudly with a roar.

The Hauria who were on the ceiling providing support with their crossbows, quickly withdrew to evade the flame bullet, but because the flame bullet exploded, it wasn’t possible to completely dodge it due to the heat wave generated that scattered widely. At the very least, the places which were used as scaffolding were collapsing down, in the little time before they manage to reach the next sniping point, support cover has completely ceased.

[Dancing wind! Carry out my will, “Sound of Wind”!]

Gaharudo casted his next magic in that timeframe. Supplementary magic “Sound of Wind” from the wind system. It interferes with the surrounding air and amplifies sound, it’s a magic that allows small sounds in the distance to be heard. His hearing was amplified to megavolume, with the assist of this magic he’ll likely regain his hearing.

Certainly, it could be said that this was the magic version of the skill presence perception when applied. Though I say that, the accuracy decreases because they’re being perceived through hearing only, concentration was required to make sense of what’s heard due to that it’s an unsuitable magic to be used during the proximity of battle. This was a basic magic that scouts and secret agents used for information gathering.

[Raa～aa!!]

[Tsu------!!]

[Kuu～u!]

Along with the yell of fighting spirit, his slashes bent and transformed as if he were using a whip.

While raising out a voice of anguish, Gaharudo deceive his senses by overriding them to feel the presences, the Haruia managed to get through it by cooperating with each other. However, because of “Sound of Wind” their presences were seen though. With each step the Hauria took, they generated a subtle sound in the wind.

With his sight deprived, although the method being used was far from proper “Presence Perception”, with a torrent of blood thirst, courage and ferociousness, Gaharudo moved forwards without hesitation and entrusted his body to the information gathering magic.

This is the Emperor. This is the head of a military nation. The king of warriors who boast that power is everything!

This was what the Hauria’s managed to feel first hand…..

However, everyone had a ghastly smile on their lips that was far from shrinking away. The eyes that pierced through the masks shone ferociously in glare, a heavy thirst for blood surged out from each and everyone of them. If they couldn’t hide their presence, then they’ll just cooperate and bring him down! As if announcing that, the Haruia began to move as if they were all one creature.

[Kukuku, You’re giving off quite the good thirst for blood there! Na~a, Hauria’s!]

The cooperation attack was on the level that wouldn’t be an exaggeration to say that it exceeded the techniques based on hit and run from all directions pouring in. While fighting back against the peculiar swordsmanship, Gaharudo shouted out happily. It appears that he found out that they were the Hauria tribe long ago.

Even though they heard Gaharudo’s shout, the Haruia were silent. They only singlemindedly released their murderous intent.

[A～a? You guys won't let out shocked voices!?]

Judging from his words, as expected, only his sense of hearing has recovered a little thanks to the magic. Towards Gaharudo's shout, the Haruias released especially strong thirst for blood------while Cam was brandishing his two short swords, he replied back while overflowing with murderous intent.

[Those are tasteless words on the battlefield. Survive if you can]

[～! Ha, just what I wanted!]

Sparks danced in the darkness and the sword swings became much more intense like a storm.

However, the blades didn't reach either bodies. Tens of seconds, several minutes…..the people whose mouths, arms, and legs were cut in a certain places began to have anguished expressions, they prayed for their kings victory while being irritated that no one was rushing in from the outside.

At the same time, they guessed that the assailants from the shadows were Usagininzoku due to seeing as the sparks were produced by the swords, towards that impossible scene and towards the unknown, they were desperately holding in the fear they felt.

Then, at that time, their expectation was betrayed by the situation.

[~!, What the? my body…..]

Gaharudo suddenly began to stagger, his movements rapidly dulled. As if saying, [We were waiting for this!], the Hauria sprang from all directions.

Although Gaharudo somehow managed to resist back, it appears that Gaharudo's oddness was assumed to happen from the beginning, an arrow shot out with exquisite timing and dug deeply into Gaharudo's calf.

[Gua!]

Cam wielded his small sword towards Gaharudo who was folding from his knees. While blocking Gaharudo's sword with one short sword, the other was used to cut through the tendon in his arm, his sword finally dropped to the ground.

Although Gaharudo tried to move instantly with magic, 2 of the Haruia's blocked his way at that exact moment and wielded their small swords in confirmation of the battle still going on, they destroyed and blew away the magic formation and the artifact that was being concealed. At the same time, the remaining arm and legs tendons were cut.

[Tsu-------]

Severe pain was gushing out, however, Gaharudo didn't scream out, his body began to incline slowly against his will, and ~Dosha~ it was the sound of his body falling prone on the ground.

The party hall fell silent and no words were emitted. Though a few were physically unable to say anything due to their mouths being forced shut, surely, even if they could open their mouths, none of them would have been able to actually say anything.

The Emperor of the Hoelscher Empire was defeated.

Even if their view was shut by darkness, they could tell. Towards that fact, the shock was so huge it erased everything else from their minds.

One of the Haruia tribe members approached Gaharudo who was still laying on the ground. And for now, gave him medicine to recover his sight and hearing. This was done in order to negotiate about the future.

[Fu~n, a monsters paralysis poisoning was scattered here so that you'd stay in place]

[Damn it, were you aiming for that from the beginning……]

Gaharudo was removed of all magic formations and artifacts that were inscribed onto his clothing. When Cam told him of the reason why his body was acting abnormally after restoring his sight and hearing, he cursed out at him.

Light suddenly poured down over Gaharudo's head. It was due to one of the Hauria's equipment which acted as a flashlight. It shined down on Gaharudo as if it was a spotlight.

[Wwwwwwww, what does this mean!? Ttttttt, this!? Nyanyanya, Nyagumo-san!? jjj, just what!!]

[It's fine, calm down a little princess. Right now is the climax after all]

With the tendons in the hands and feet cut, clothes torn up here and there because of the destruction of the magic formations, the appearance of Gaharudo being illuminated by the light appeared on the ground, with lots of agitation Ririana's mouth closed and opened while shakingly asking Hajime questions who she assumed was the reason for such an event.

During the attack, although Ririana was besides the crowned prince Bias, Hajime instantaneously retrieved her and returned to his original position. During the Hauria's strategy execution, Hajime and them all gathered in the corner of the hall so that they don't become obstructive.

Kouki was frowning grandly as he noticed that many aristocrats were dead. Suzu, Shizuku, and Ryutaro fell silent with a difficult expression. This was the biggest chance of improving the Demi-humans standings, because they understood this they kept silent as the battle was literally deciding the Haruia's fates, though they still couldn't fully accept the tragedy that unfolded in front of their presence so easily.

In the first place, there was no other choice but to just watch things happen. If they let out their emotions, [Anymore than this is overdoing it!], they'd be obstructing Cam, at that instant, they would be attacked in the back by a railgun.

Although Ririana was speaking loudly and shakingly in unrest, Hajime had Kouki well within view and consideration. Shizuku was thinking about what to do in the case that that does happen, in another sense, cold sweat appeared more from Hajime's glances at Kouki than of the Haruia's massacre.

[Now then, Gaharudo D. Hoelscher. Do you understand why you're still alive right now?]

[Fu~n, you have demands right? Just say them, I'll listen]

[……Points deducted. Gaharudo. Know where you stand]

The appearance wasn't seen but the voice of a man echoed throughout the hall. It's true identity was Cam.

Although Cam called out to Gaharudo who was on the ground, from Gaharudo's insolent attitude, after several intervals, he gave out advice in a mechanical voice.

And, the advice didn't stop at just words.

Suddenly, the spotlight distanced itself from Gaharudo. There, with the tendons in their hands and legs cut just like Gaharudo, it was the appearance of a man whose tongue was torn to seal off chants.

An arm extended from outside of the spotlight and was gripping onto the man's hair and forced him to stand on his knees, in the next instant, the man's head as if jokingly was easily cut off.

[You bastard!]

[Points deducted]

Gaharudo instinctively raised out an angry voice. The other survivors should have seen it perfectly from where they were at. Breathtaking screams could be heard. However, in a serene voice just like a machine was returned towards Gaharudo's attitude.

Then, the spotlight once again moved to a different place, and that man was similarly beheaded.

[Vesta! You, getting so carri----]

[Points deducted]

Was it an aide, the name of the man who was beheaded was called out, Although Gaharudo was cursing out, in return, the indifferent voice sounded out and another man was beheaded.

[.....]

While grinding his teeth tightly he fell silent, Gaharudo's stared into the darkness with eyes that seemed to be able to kill a person with just a glare. Towards such a Gaharudo, Cam indifferently

talked anyways.

[That's right, understand that your position has reached rock bottom. Judge quickly and choose your words wisely. Right now, the lives of all the people in this hall, depends on your speech and behavior]

Simultaneously with those words, a hand extended from outside of the spotlight and placed a necklace on Gaharudo's neck before he was aware. It was a thin chain with a bright red jewel attached on the tip.

[This is the "Collar of Oath". Gaharudo, the oath which you'll pledge to from your mouth, this artifact will be holding your life as lateral. If it triggers even once, not just you, but anyone else who's connected with your soul throughout your life will die. If the oath is broken, naturally, you'll die]

The implied meaning, all humans in the room have been secured, Cam informed him that all others have been forced to wear the same artifact. Gaharudo seemed to have understood and his expression twisted as if he was forced to chew 10,000 bitter worms and insects.

The necklace artifact called "Collar of Oath" that Cam placed onto Gaharudo's neck, the jewel and ore it was made out of was created through Generation Magic which infused Spirit Magic into it, according to Cam's words, it has the effect of making sure that the oath that comes out of his mouth stays carried out on a spiritual level.

Specifically, the oath that is said will be directly engraved onto their spirit, if the oath is broken or the “Collar of Oath” is removed, their spirit itself will disappear. Moreover, it even affects the next in line souls, in other words, it affects Gaharudo’s entire clan, similarly they would all die if they don’t wear the “Collar of Oath”. In short, towards every one of the Emperor’s clan, the oath from the artifact will have to be followed throughout all generations to come. (A separate artifact is needed for people who become relatives through marriage)

[An oath….you say?]

[There are 4 contents to the oath. First, the emancipation of all the existing slaves, second, a definite promise of nonaggression and nonintervention with the Sea of Trees, third, prohibiting the enthrallment and persecution of Demi-humans, fourth, make all conditions legal laws. Have you understood? If you understand, say, “I swear it here on behalf of Hoelscher”. After that it’ll activate]

[And if I don’t?]

[The Imperial house ends today, the necks of officers will continue flying until the empire straightens out the situation, afterwards, assassinations would be carried out repeatedly for a long time to come. Until we, the Haruia tribe is annihilated, the Empire’s safety in the night is long lost. Officers of the Empire when coming home will only find the heads of their wife and children]

[Don’t underestimate the Empire. Even if we die, it won’t collapse so easily. An army will definitely be led to invade and attack the Sea of Trees and this time, Fair Bergen will definitely be destroyed. You should already understand. It’s not difficult to navigate through the fog of the Sea of Trees if a slave is used. Although combat is harder, it can easily be done through numbers, there are no problems through smashing the Sea of Trees from the edge inwards. Up until now, the reason why we haven’t crushed Fair Bergen…..]

[Because it would be impossible to harvest if you crushed the field……right?]

[So you do understand. Right now, you'll still be in time. For example, even if you borrowed that guys power, the skills to bring down the Imperial castle in such short time, and that last battle…..as expected, losing you guys would be regrettable. If you guys don't want to be slaves then I will give you preferential treatment to be under my direct command as my personal troops?]

[Out of the question. You do not deserve our trust based on your behavior of Demi-humans thus far. That's why I'll have you pledge to the "oath"]

[Then, it's war huh. I will definitely not pledge to the oath]

How about it? Gaharudo was about to say until his lips distorted, Cam was as mechanical as always.

[Is that so? …..Point's deducted, Gaharudo]

Once again, those words resounded out, what was picked out by the spotlight which poured down was…….

[Let go! Who do you think I am! This impudent bunny beast dares! I'll massacre you all! I'll kill every last one of you! One by one, I'll torture you in front of your families until you die! Even the women, until they break I-egu～e---------]

It was crowned prince Bias.

The sounds of the crowned prince's shout could be heard throughout the place.

Immediately following that, without any hesitation, a silver line fluttered and the head of the crowned prince of the Hoelscher empire was easily flung into the air.

Author notes on the bottom that they might reconsider the oath's content

Hauria VS. Emperor -Later-

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Just like a joke, the head of the next inline Emperor, Bias, was easily flung into the air.

[.....]

[That was the next Emperor. Your successor…..can you bear seeing that, can you bear hearing that, that was quite awful]

[.....I should have already said it. Even if we were all massacred, I won't be pledging to anything. Be crushed by the fury of the Empire]

[To have that kind of attitude even after your son's been killed. Ma~a, to begin with, he's probably never been loved by you. After all, the position of Emperor is decided through ability, that's why it's not unusual for relatives to try and murder one another]

It was exactly as Cam said, relatives could gain the position of Emperor by winning a duel. Even if the partner is killed during the duel it wouldn't be considered a crime.

Gaharudo had many concubines who gave birth besides the queen, Bias himself was a child of a concubine which managed to become Crowned Prince through showing his abilities in duels. It was befitting of their principles, the weak will follow the strong! and there you have it.

Probably because of that, Gaharudo's expression didn't change at all. Since the beginning, the standards were either weak or strong, there have been rumors that there were no love for his sons and daughters……there didn't seem to be any hidden emotions either, so it may very well be true. Rather, the aide from a while ago was the only time he really exposed his anger.

Gaharudo that was snorting towards Cam's words.

[If you know that it's useless now then just stop]

[There's no rush. You won't pledge no matter what? You'll continue tormenting the Demi-humans after this? You'll continue tracking down our Haruia Tribe?]

[How repetitious]

[Is that so…..”Delta 1, this is Alpha 1, do it”]

---------Alpha 1, this is Delta 1. Roger

All of the sudden, Cam started saying things which Gaharudo couldn't comprehend. Though Gaharudo had a questioning expression, in the next moment, he felt and heard the roar of a huge explosion through his belly and the complexion of his face changed.

[-. What was that just now!]

[What, it's not that much of a big deal. We only blew up the

barracks that were watching the slaves]

[Blew up? It can't be……]

[Fumu, how many people were inside again……anyways several hundreds of soldiers just died. It's all your fault, Gaharudo]

[You bastards did it!]

[Nope, it was you, Gaharudo. Your decision claimed the lives of those soldiers. And……"Delta 1, this is Alpha 1, do it"]

Once again, Cam muttered things which Gaharudo couldn't comprehend, Gaharudo immediately called out to him. It was far too bad of a joke that they could remotely detonate explosives from this location.

[Oi! Hauria~!]

However, Gaharudo's words were in vain, a second roar erupted. Not within the Imperial Castle. A large explosion occurred somewhere in the capital.

Holding back his emotions, Gaharudo asked.

[……Where was that explosion?]

[The hospital]

[Wha, damn you!]

[Be relieved. What blew up was the military's hospital. The only ones that died were soldiers and their doctors……to begin with, the

public hospital, Inns, brothels, residential areas, though lots of people lost their homes and are living in temporary shelters after the Majinzoku's attack, do you have any request?]

[Don't go laying your hands on the general public! How far are you going to fall Hauria!]

[.....You guys always persecuted us Demi-humans. You've got no right to complain when the positions are turned around……"Delta, do it"]

[Wait～!]

The entire Empire persecuted the Demi-humans, at this point how is the general public not involved? Cam showed a slightly amazed voice. Then, mercilessly gave out the order.

The third explosion was heard, this time Gaharudo was grinding his teeth together as he was convinced that the publics buildings were bombed. But actually it was the drawbridge which allows entry into the Imperial castle. Since there will likely be reports coming from the capital about the explosions, the only route to enter the castle was destroyed.

In addition, Cam's words were partly a bluff, they never set any bombs in areas that weren't related to the army. The explosions weren't caused through remote methods either, a unit of Hauria's that sneaked into the castle had to manually set them off, due to this they couldn't set up bombs in many places.

[If you won't be pledging then we have no other choice. I'll have to set off every bomb we've set up in the capital, you Imperial aristocrats and leaders here will be lending a hand in it. Thousands of people will be accompanying each other to the otherside. It's not

a bad way to end huh?]

What he was saying was definitely terrorist-like. Who the heck taught him……though some glances were focused on the boy in the corner of the hall, the actual person was indifferent.

Towards the merciless demand, Gaharudo couldn't decide quickly and became silent. Though he was looking through his head for a method of breaking out of the current situation, no bright idea's came to mind. His expression was sour and breaking out in cold sweat, it showed that he was being cornered.

And despite that Cam didn't allow him any breathing room at all. Since the reply was slow he gave out orders.

["Delta, this is Alpha 1…….do-"]

[Wait~!]

Gaharudo called out in a panicking voice. And he slammed his head into the ground several times to calm himself down, looked up with a face as if giving up

[Shi----, damn it all! I get it! It's my defeat! I'll accept your demands! That's why, stop taking lives indiscriminately through explosions!]

[That's excellent. Then pledge to the oath]

Even though the demands were accepted, Cam replied indifferently. Gaharudo could only show a bitter smile. And while relaxing his shoulders, he talked to the remaining survivors within the hall.

[Ha~a, damn, I'm sorry you guys. I was done in this time. …..In the Empire strength is everything. These Usagininzoku, the Haura, showed it through "bringing down the Imperial castle". Holding the lives of people. Hence, "As the representative of Hoelscher! All Demi-human slaves shall be freed! We shall never interfere with the Sea of Trees! Now at this time, the persecution and enslavement of Demi-humans is now prohibited! Those who break these vows shall be severely punished by the Empire! They shall also be enacted as new laws in the Empire!" If you guys have complaints, come to my place! If you can beat me, you can do whatever you want afterwards!]

If you wanted to treat Demi-humans as slaves like always, exterminate all who hold Hoescher's blood! I'll take you on! he declared. He really was a man who adhered to the principles that abilities reigned supreme. Of course this judgement does no harm to the Empire besides their loss of relations with the Demi-humans, as expected, losing in a direct battle had quite a huge impact.

[Fumu, you've finally answered correctly]

Along with those words, spotlights showed down onto everyone in the Emperor's clan. The still young and oldest grandchildren who should not have been at the hall had a necklace with a bright red stone on their necks.

[If you don't want the Hoelscher blood to be exterminated, don't

forget the oath]

[I know]

[The content of the oath will be made public tomorrow, at the very least liberate all the slaves in the capital by the end of tomorrow]

[By tomorrow? Just how many slaves do you think there are in the Empire……]

[Do it]

[You dirty bastard! I just have to do it right, I'll do it!]

[Free the slaves and send them directly to the Sea of Trees. Gaharudo. You must accompany them to Fair Bergen. And then repeat the oath in front of the elders]

[Alone? Wouldn't I normally be killed?]

[We'll return you back safely. If you died, various problems would arise?]

[Haa~, I got it. I've had a bad feeling ever since you guys broke out of prison. To think that we'd be pushed this far. ……Na~a, do you have a grudge against me or the Empire, Hajime Nagumo?]

Gaharudo glared at Hajime through the darkness.

However there was no answer from Hajime. While holding Ririana by the neck like a kitten, he was leaning against the wall and yawning. Right now was the Haruia tribe's time to take the leading role. That's why, he seemed to take on the stance "I'm only a spectator in this affair".

There weren't any lights, even though Gaharudo couldn't see his

appearance, he at least figured that Hajime had no intentions of answering. Gaharudo grandly clicked his tongue.

[Gaharudo, as a warning. We definitely obtained some help from our benefactor who changed us. However, that power had already became ours exclusively. If we wanted to, we could easily search for information and invade the castle at any time. It's easy to scratch your neck when sleeping. If you don't make the laws, even without the power of our benefactor our blades could easily cut your neck]

[Exclusive use. I'm quite jealous. To be able to use artifacts even though Demi-humans have no magical powers……]

Gaharudo's crushed and sour expressions weren't hard to believe. Because it was impossible for the Demi-humans to stand up against another race without magic, however with the use of artifacts that fact was easily destroyed.

However, it isn't enough to just say stop it, at best they could only curse out at them. [Jeez, what else could I do!], Gaharudo shouted his feelings towards Hajime.

His army was burning down because of the person who created an artifact which allowed him to fly in the air and travel the distance which should have taken 2 months into just a day and a half, if anyone were to be armed with artifacts of that stature then the Hauria's claim of being able to invade anywhere and carry out assassinations held lots of credibility.

By the way, what was used this time around was the "Spider-typed Golem Scout", "Improved Telepathy Stone", and the "Gate Key".

The “Spider-type Golem Scout” was the spider that saved Ririana. It was approximately 5 centimeters in length, can go anywhere through remote control with “Transmuting” and “Thread”, the images are sent to the “Crystal Display” through the “Distance Transmitting Stone”, and it can sense magic traps just like the magic eye. It also has paralysis and sleeping poison in its feet, even poison which makes it so that the little sonny doesn’t get up.

After Hajime entered the castle, he scattered and installed countless spider-typed golems everywhere. The reason why Hajime was seemingly distracted while in the castle was because the majority of his concentration was used to operate the golems. It was only a coincidence that he saw and helped Ririana while moving towards an installation point.

And the images that the countless spider-typed surveillance cameras that were set up were being transmitted back to the crystal displays installed at Headquarters, each Hauria force had an operator who communicated through the “Improved Telepathy Stone”, which enabled efficient and precise suppression.

The “Improved Telepathy Stone” was the single and most useful artifact to use against Gaharudo.

The principle was this. Ore’s with the property of “High-Speed Magic Recovery” was created through Creation Magic and added into the magical power tanks which caused them to auto regen, it always added fuel back into it as “Magic Radiation” was being emitted.

And the magic formation needed to activate it was a kind of sliding switch which was placed on it to allow it to smoothly activate on and off. Furthermore, there was a function which responded to the blood and status plate, meaning only the blood of the user would be accepted.

As a result, the Hauria forces were able to cooperate elaborately with Headquarters which was stationed outside of the capital.

Since they can't actually operate the golems, without Hajime they'd have to manually place the spider-typed surveillance cameras. For that purpose, they infiltrated into the castle and installed the new hidden camera's for the Haruia. Because the golems were unnecessarily complex, they were made to be hard to spot.

Moreover, the key-typed artifact "Gate Key" held a similar principle, because Hajime set up and concealed the keyhole-typed artifact "Gate Hall" in places, the Hauria are able to invade the castle anytime through opening the gate.

Really, from the Empire's view, [What else could I do!], was definitely the right state.

To begin with, the magic traps are difficult to disarm without being able to directly manipulate magical power, so the fact is, another invasion would probably never be as smooth as this one.

Hajime and them purposely used Kouki to enter the castle, besides installing the spider-typed golem scouts, they were also to disarm traps that the golems discovered. Hajime and Shia in particular,

Yue and Shia had to use the “Presence Severing Stone” to easily hide their presence, Kaori also acted, the magic traps were disarmed without notice before the party began.

For now, though there were artifacts devised to disarm magic traps, Fairglass (a goggle-typed artifact which could detect magic traps) was distributed to the Hauria, however this time they had no time for that. That’s why although they wouldn’t be able to disarm the traps, they could evade them instead.

[Don’t worry about it, Gaharudo. The artifacts only belong to the Haruia and no other Demi-humans. Now that you’ve swore to the oath, it wouldn’t do for us to get full of ourselves and attack the Empire. If that happens, we Hauria will wield our blades against the foolish people of Fair Bergen]

Towards those words, Gaharudo guessed that the Hauria were independent from Fair Bergen, however they single-mindedly interfered in order to save their fellow Demi-humans (although it was actually only for the Usagininzoku).

[Is that so. I get the idea now. That’s why, release us already. An unreasonable request was made to be done by tomorrow. If I don’t act now I probably wouldn’t be able to make it on time]

[……That’s good. We Hauria will always be watching you guys. Don’t even think about forgetting it in your dreams either]

Towards those last words, the spotlights disappeared and silence surrounded the hall. At the same time that his presence perception informed him that the Hauria were withdrawing, Hajime received a transmission.

----Boss. This is Alpha 1. All troops have withdrawn. For all the help, we cannot thank you enough

----It was for Shia's sake. Don't mind it. Besides, everythings not over yet. Stay cautious. Or rather, what's up ahead is the true battle. There's no guarantee that there wouldn't be an idiot who'll think "Eliminate the Emperor's clan".

----I'll take it to heart, boss. Since the beginning, we've been resoluted and prepared to fight. This path, is the path that the new Hauria tribe has decided to walk down.

Towards Cam's words filled with resolution and drive, Hajime's lips raised up. And he gave them a pure praise.

----Is that so. If you're resolute then there's nothing else for it. To all Hauria tribesmen. You were superb!

Towards the boss who they loved, respected and led them, all Hauria's Usamimis extended straight up! and after a beat passed by.

In the next moment through the telepathy stone, a grand shout erupted.

----Oo~OOOOOOOOOO!!!!

That was the cry of victory. For hundreds of years, they were the

losers of losers who continued suffering bitter experiences, it was the cry of delight after finally bringing down a huge enemy for the first time.

Being completely honest, what lays ahead is a sight where it's prohibited to enslave and persecute Demi-humans, prohibited to interfere with the Sea of Trees, and Demi-humans are protected. Exactly as Hajime said, people who desired Demi-humans as slaves would come and try to eradicate the Emperor's clan, there's even a possibility that there's a hole in the oath which the Empire may use to oppress the Demi-humans again.

That's exactly why, it was appropriate to say that the Hauria's battle starts now.

At the very least, the oath was imposed, by now, if the Empire invades the Sea of Trees, the Hauria wouldn't be able to do anything. With this earned time, the Hauria can save and gather power and numbers, and if necessary acquire high level techniques (Assassination) and guerrilla tactics. That way, even if the Empire is prepared to overcome the Oath, they won't get what they want so easily.

Right, the point of the strategy right now was to make the people at the top of the Empire wear collars and buy time to allow the Hauria to gather strength to be able to withstand the Empire. As such, certainly, the victor of this fight was unmistakably the Hauria Usagininzoku from the weakest Demi-human species.

[Damn, those guys, I shouldn't have left them unattended. …..Someone, the lights….a～a, that's right is anyone there…..tte, kora～a! Hajime Nagumo! You bastard, how long do you plan on

pretending! At any rate, you're uninjured! Do something about this situation!]

Hajime narrowed his eyes as the Hauria's shout of joy was being communicated, at the same time Shia was embracing and rubbing up on Hajime because of the strategies success, from the other side (even in the darkness Hajime could see Gaharudo's appearance rolling around) of the darkness, and began to hear Gaharudo's angry voice.

By the way, the moment that he was embraced by Shia, Ririana who he was holding onto was cast aside without hesitation. Towards the sudden attack which caused the death of her fiance, Ririana could only be stunned, after being treated so by Hajime, with tears in her eyes, [Even though, I'm a Princess~!], while muttering about her constant grief, she crumbled onto the ground like a woman who was deserted by her lover.

[alright, I hear you……]

While embracing Shia with one hand, he took out an ore from the "Treasure Warehouse" which flew up towards the ceiling and emitted light. The light stone that floated towards the ceiling in the darkness caused the hall to brighten up just like daytime when they were brought to the hall.

The party hall became completely visible, "horrifying" was the perfect word for it. There were huge quantities of blood splattered everywhere and countless heads on the ground. Besides the heads on the ground which didn't have time to say goodbyes, everyone else seemed to be alright, though they were all groaning and crawling on the floor with their tendons in their hands and feet cut.

There were lots of mademoiselles who had toilet accidents due to the fear and pain. The moment when the hall was lit up and the disastrous scene was seen, many lost their consciousness, in a certain sense it was good fortune.

Though some of the courageous mademoiselles were just barely conscious, the moment they saw Shia's Usamimis, they gave out screams and fainted as the whites in their eyes showed. Even the men who didn't fear much was frightened when they saw Shia.

It appears that the fear of the Hauria tribe was deeply carved into them.

Within that, Hajime's group and the Hero's group was clearly completely unhurt. The people who were fighting until they end were giving them stares full of hatred. It appears that they completely believed that it was a conspiracy.

[Oi, kora, Hajime Nagumo. Quit flirting already and help out. What kind of nerves do you have to be able to admire a woman in this situation, and on top of that an Usagininzoku woman at that]

[Nah, look, Shia's a weak rabbit after all, the raid from earlier frightened her. She's so pitiful. Those guys were truly fearsome people. All I could do was protect myself]

While saying those foolish things, Hajime was shivering unnaturally.

Veins appeared on Gaharudo's forehead. Even the people whose tongues were cut to seal off there chants, while on the ground glared at them cruelly as if stating, [We'll kill you with glares!]. Kouki and them who had strong nerves even trembled from the gazes.

[How impudent…..in any case, it doesn't change the fact that you're unhurt. If you hold no malice against the Empire then, nurse us, being needed by people is good isn't it*I think this line means this, 人を呼ぶなりしてくれてもいいんじゃねぇか*?]

[However about that, your subordinates are giving out blood thirst as if saying that the instant they're healed they'll attack us……In that case, is it alright if I just finish them off?]

[There's no way that's alright! Oi, you guys! Don't ever lay your hands on that monster over there! Even if he's just a damn cheeky brat whos always being surrounded by great women and surely started a conspiracy with the Haruia tribe, don't you dare go waste your lives!]

The surviving subordinate's eyes distort due to their masters command for them to stay alive with regret. Hajime saw their eyes distorting.

[Look, even if I want to kill you guys, there's no one here stupid enough to willingly jump into a monster's jaws. I won't have it. If we don't get started soon some people are going to bleed out. I'm begging you, Hajime Nagumo]

[Ma~a, I don't particularly mind if you guys won't be coming at me. I'm relying on you, Kaori]

[Un~, leave it to me…..”Sacred Text”!]

Without chanting. Without magic formations. the wave of first-class recovery magic shined immediately after calling out the magic name and rippled throughout the entire party hall. With that the wounded people were healed up instantly.

[Even recovery skills are monster class. ……I can't take this*I think? やってられねぇな*]

Gaharudo complained with a tired expression after he noticed that Kaori's recovery magic wasn't normal. Gaharudo's subordinates were dumbfounded as well to be completely healed in an instant. To be able to immediately cast first-class magic was impossible for the general people so it was natural.

Disregarding the mademoiselles who fainted and didn't get back up, those who could fight immediately gathered around Gaharudo and they looked towards Hajime with stern and cautioned expressions.

[I've already said it, give it up already. If you release blood lust like awhile ago and cause a counterattack we'd all get completely annihilated]

[But your Majesty! These guys clearly guided them in!]

[That's right! Even the Crowned Prince……we can't just leave them alone!]

[At this rate the Empire's pride will fall to the ground!]

Gaharudo's troublesome subordinates all speak out in sequence.

Even though they felt that Kaori's recovery magic wasn't normal, they had not witnessed Hajime's powers with their own eyes. Moreover, some of them previously saw Kouki and the Emperor's fight at the Kingdom, because of this they "alternatively" used it as reference.

Above that, the damage that the Hauria caused was massive. After all, they placed a "Curse" on the present Emperor and his clan, although that was largely the reason, it was also because the next-in-term Emperor was beheaded. They couldn't back down easily.

Towards the subordinates rage, Gaharudo sighed out while gaining drive. For them who groaned and staggered, Gaharudo's voice filled with dignity turned towards the people within the hall.

[Quit making so much noise! I believe I've already said, don't go dying pointlessly. Got it, that white haired eyepatch wearing fellow is a true flesh and blood monster. Even if we brought out an entire army, he alone would annihilate it, that's who we're facing. …...They're strong, don't even step on their shadows. I'm not saying we have to follow what that guy says but, as people who adhere to the principle that abilities reign supreme, at least have the ability to judge the opponents strength!]

With an angry and shaking voice, the subordinates and even the aristocrats stiffen up.

[It goes the same for the Hauria tribe. Those guys who should have had the weakest power came and challenged the entire Empire. The reason why we were done in was because we were stupid and weak? I don't intend to leave things off like this, those guys also probably think the same……but first admit it. We lost. The losers

follow the victor. That is the Empire's rule! Even still, if you have a complaint then let me hear it! Convince me through power, make me follow you! Just like those guys did!]

Gaharudo's angry voice echoed throughout the party hall. Those who couldn't stand looked towards him, after the subordinates around Gaharudo hesitated slightly, they hung their heads down before him. Deep within themselves they knew, the one who fought until the final moment was Gaharudo. Gaharudo's words, more than anything was heavy.

[Un, with this it's case closed]

Towards Hajime's satisfied words, everyone turned to look at Hajime with hatred. Those gazes spoke more than words. That is, [You're one to talk! You God of Plague!].

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~~~

of night they were holding an emergency meeting to adhere the oaths. Mid-way in, one of the leaders who wasn't at the party hall laughed at the foolish contents of the oath……

That moment, the lights in the conference room instantaneously died out, when the lights came back on the horror of a subordinate's head laying on the table appeared, it was the subordinate of the man who was opposing them. The man could do nothing but nod away while turning pale. The other leaders were reminded of the party and began to tremble. The later talks seemed to have been settled quickly.

While compiling damage reports from every place, the laws for the Demi-humans were rapidly made (the draft prepared by the Hauria). At this point, Gaharudo found out that the Hauria had not laid their hands on the general public.

However, from the fact that none of the general facilities were reported to have been destroyed through explosions, he received a message that it was possible to blow them up at anytime and began to worry substantially because of all the possible bombs planted in their facilities.

And within the middle of the night, soldiers were woken up because of the explosions, their individually owned slaves were guided to the countless temporarily raised tents on the open plot of land from the previous demon turmoil. They immediately began to retrieve the slaves in the next building where slaves were being held.

Naturally, fierce resistance was bound to happen. Just when they were woken up in the middle of night, the owned slaves were being

forcefully seized. In particular, the slave association was showing symptoms of becoming bankrupted. Financial compensation was promised to be given at a later time, even though it was a royal command by the Emperor, they weren't able to easily consent to it.

Nevertheless, it was a direct order from the country, they had no choice but to compromise…..stretching time in between then and now, there were many who folded and whined, roughly all of those people were found beheaded in the morning.

And when the afternoon of the next day came to pass, an abnormal situation with Demi-humans gathered in one place in the capital caused citizens to gather and the announcement from the Empire was announced. About the consent of the oath and the additional laws that were established.

Towards the bluntly reported announcement, the citizens became dumbfounded. That was to be expected. Their familiar and convenient tools were suddenly taken away from them. Moreover, it was forbidden to capture them in the future. The situation was honestly one where they couldn't comprehend.

Eventually, the obvious and natural complaints began to flow out and it quickly became a large and strong opposition. It was about to become a riot, the Empire soldiers began defending the Demi-human slaves from the people in cold sweat, but it became quiet after the announcement made with exquisite timing.

In other words,

[All actions towards Demi-humans was because an “Oracle” from “Ehto-sama”!]

Furthermore, with the appearance of Kaori who fluttered her silver wings and was shining as she descended down from the sky, Kouki showed the light and appearance of his sacred sword. As a result, the announcement held credibility.

Towards the divine appearance (being produced by Hajime’s artifacts) the citizens all got down on one knee and prayed.

Actually, Kaori was trying hard not to run away as she was blushing in shame, if Kaori felt like it, the silver feathers that were being worshiped by the citizens, [Thank you～], could easily be turned into weapons that decomposed everything, Gaharudo who was at wits end on how to explain the laws and emancipation of slaves was simply proposed, [wouldn’t it be alright if we just use Ehto?], Hajime who was in high spirits was chuckling to himself about how amusing it was that the citizens were so serious……Everyone could surely faint peacefully together.

Obtaining and holding onto “God’s Apostle’s feathers”, reluctantly the slave owners backed down as there was also compensation from the country and the majority of citizens were cheerful. In front of their eyes, several thousands of slave’s shackles were being removed by the soldiers one after the other.

The Demi-humans seemed to have been stunned but accepted it with silence. Being completely honest they weren’t sure about what was happening at the moment. Even if they understood they likely wouldn’t be able to believe it.

Before long, with some time the slave's shackles were all removed and Kouki who showed natural charisma led the Demi-humans outside of the capital. Along with him was also obviously Gaharudo as well as Hajime and them.

The Demi-humans were stunned as they left the capital, amplifying her voice with physical reinforcement Shia shouted out, [You guys are free~! Return to your homes~!], they finally seemed to realize that they were "liberated" and they all shouted out in joy all at once which caused the ground to shake.

Under the cheerful blue sky, while at the Empire's outer walls, several thousands of Demi-humans headed towards home. Towards the impossible illusion, tears were falling down and Demi-humans were joyfully patting eachothers shoulders.

Within those, there were many who received cruel physical and mental wounds as well, but they were healed through Reproduction Magic and Spirit Magic. Because even Yue couldn't accurately erase their memories enmass, she compromised that it was necessary for them to be surrounded by family and friends in the long-term.

There were also many Demi-humans that were transported to many different towns, Hajime and them couldn't be responsible to heal them. They as well, after returning to the Sea of Trees, have no choice but to allow their minds to be supported by the people around them.

Even still, they'll be able to once again live in their hometown,

they can meet their important people that they were separated from once again…..it was surely suitable to call this event a “Miracle”.

Hajime who was looking at the Demi-humans shouting in joy, began thinking about his family in Japan, [Someday I too will……], he muttered inside himself and quietly clenched Yue’s hand who snuggled up closely. The cute lover was as if saying, [It’s alright], gently returned strength into Hajime’s hand.

Chapter 122 Character Introduction

Apologies, no story this chapter. By popular request.

Incomplete, may be missing characters. Status may be off.

(TN: also added some extra info from previous chapters, uncertain translations marked with [?])

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Status Plates

＝＝

Nagumo Hajime (南雲ハジメ) Strength 10950 > 12150

17 yo M Vitality 13190 > 14250

Transmuter (錬成師) Resist 10670 > 11870

Lv ??? > ??? Agility 13450 > 14550

ch 25 > 122 Magic 14780 > 15980

Adventurer Rank: Gold Magic Resist 14780 > 15980

Hero of the series. Originally a gentle, quiet otaku boy, but

was labelled incompetant -> bullied -> fell into the abyss ->

left arm was eaten -> became OP -> mindset changed: now talks

with guns-first. Harem happened (though he treats Yue alone as special). Seeks to conquer the Great Dungeons so he can return home to Japan. (Author Note: stats are temporary, don't worry too much about it)

錬成 Transmutation

[＋鉱物系鑑定] ＋ Mineral Appraisal

[＋精密錬成] ＋ Precision Transmutation

[＋鉱物系探査] ＋ Mineral Enquiry

[＋鉱物分離] ＋ Mineral Separation

[＋鉱物融合] ＋ Mineral Fusion

[＋複製錬成] ＋ Replication Transmutation

[＋圧縮錬成] ＋ Compression Transmutation

[＋高速錬成] ＋ High-speed Transmutation

[＋自動錬成] ＋ Automatic Transmutation

[＋イメージ補強力上昇] ＋ Image Reinforcement Power Increase

[＋消費魔力減少] ＋ Magic Consumption Reduction

[＋鉱物分解] ＋ Mineral Decomposition

魔力操作 Magic Manipulation

[＋魔力放射] ＋ Magic Emission

[＋魔力圧縮] ＋ Magic Compression

[＋遠隔操作] ＋ Remote Control

胃酸強化 Stomach Acid Strengthening (Iron Stomach)

纏雷 Lightning Armor (Lightning Clad)

[＋雷耐性] ＋ Lightning Resistance

[＋出力増大] ＋ Output Increase

天歩 Sky Walk (Divine Step)

[＋空力] ＋ Void Grip (Air Walk/Aerodynamic)

[＋縮地] ＋ Shukuchi (Instant Movement/Flicker/Ground Shrink)

[＋豪脚] ＋ Grand Legs

[＋瞬光] ＋ Lightspeed

風爪 Wind Claw (Air Claw)

[＋三爪] ＋ Triple Claws

[＋飛爪] ＋ Flying Claws

夜目 Night Vision

遠見 Far Vision

気配感知 Perception

[＋特定感知] ＋ Specific Perception

魔力感知 Magic Perception

[＋特定感知] ＋ Specific Perception

熱源感知 Heat Perception

[＋特定感知] ＋ Specific Perception

気配遮断　Hide Presence (Sign Interception)

[＋幻踏]　＋ Phantom Dance (Phantom Step)

毒耐性　Poison Resistance

麻痺耐性　Paralysis Resistance

石化耐性　Petrification Resistance

恐慌耐性　Panic Resistance

全属性耐性　All Elements Resistance

先読　Foresight

金剛　Vajra (Indestructible)

[＋部分強化]　＋ Specific Reinforcement

[＋集中強化]　＋ Concentrated Reinforcement

[＋付与強化]　＋ Grant Reinforcement

豪腕　Grand Arm

威圧　Coercion (Pressure/Intimidation)

念話　Telepathy

追跡　Tracking

高速魔力回復　High-speed Magic Recovery

[＋魔素集束]　＋ Mana Focusing

魔力変換　Magic Conversion

[＋体力変換]　＋ Vitality Conversion

[＋治癒力変換]　＋ Healing Conversion

[＋衝撃変換]　＋ Impact Conversion

限界突破	Limit Break (x3 all stats buff)
生成魔法	Creation Magic
重力魔法	Gravity Magic
空間魔法	Space Magic
再生魔法	Regeneration Magic
魂魄魔法	Spirit Magic
言語理解	Language Comprehension

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* Weapon names (German/German pronounciation):

ドンナー・シュラーク	Donner & Schlag ("Thunder & Shock"), (rail)revolvers
シュラーゲン	Schlagen ("Knockout"), anti-materiel (rail)rifle
メツェライ	Metzelei ("Slaughter"), gatling (rail)gun
オルカン	Orkan ("Hurricane"), rocket & missile launcher
ヒュペリオン	Hyperion ("Sun God"), laser satellite
フェルニル	Ferner ("Further"), airship

* Automatic Transmutation:

Automatically transmutes materials in a magic formation until the magic in the formation is exhausted.

* Mineral Decomposition:

By carefully permeating magic, mineral bonds can be unbound. It's possible to decompose up to the smallest unit, but is time consuming. Unusable in combat. Skill used to process sand-like minerals.

* Triple Claws:
Whereas the old bear claw would fire one, this fires three identical wind blades.

* Flying Claws:
Wind blades now fly.

Yue	Strength	120 > 220
323 yo F	Vitality	300 > 450
Sorceress (神子)	Resist	60 > 100
Lv 75 > 82	Agility	120 > 220
ch 67 > 122	Magic	6980 > 9180
Adventurer Rank: Gold	Magic Resist	7120 > 9320

Main heroine of the series. Imprisoned in the abyss, was saved by Hajime. Most skilled magic user in this world. Also Hajime's most skilled ero-opponent. For the time being, classed as a

Kuudere. Kuudere + bewitching + vampire princess + loli attributes.

自動再生 Auto Regeneration

[＋痛覚操作] ＋ Pain Control

[＋再生操作] ＋ Regeneration Control

全属性適性 All Elements Aptitude

複合魔法 Compound Magic

魔力操作 Magic Manipulation

[＋魔力放射] ＋ Magic Emission

[＋魔力圧縮] ＋ Magic Compression

[＋遠隔操作] ＋ Remote Control

[＋効率上昇] ＋ Increased Efficiency

[＋魔素吸収] ＋ Mana Absorption

[＋身体強化] ＋ Body Strengthening

想像構成 Imagination Composition

[＋イメージ補強力上昇] ＋ Image Reinforcement Power Up

[＋複数同時構成] ＋ Multiple Simultaneous Composition

[＋遅延発動] ＋ Delayed Invocation

血力変換 Blood Conversion

[＋身体強化] ＋ Body Strengthening

[＋魔力変換] ＋ Magic Conversion

[＋体力変換]　　＋ Vitality Conversion

[＋血盟契 約]　　＋ Blood Oath Contract

高速魔力回復　　High-speed Magic Recovery

生成魔法　　Creation Magic

重力魔法　　Gravity Magic

空間魔法　　Space Magic

再生魔法　　Regeneration Magic

魂魄魔法　　Spirit Magic

---

* Blood Oath Contract: (ch.67)

Drastic efficiency increase when blood is drained from a contracted person (ie: Hajime).

* Imagination Composition: (ch.67)

Magic formations can be completed with only a mental image (ie: chantless/formationless magic).

* Regeneration Control:

Can freely control regeneration ability.

Shia Houria　　Strength　　60 >　100

16 yo F　　Vitality　　80 > 120

Diviner (占術師)　　Resist　　60 > 100

Lv 40 > 48　　Agility　　85 > 130

ch 67 > 122　　Magic　　3020 > 3800

Adventurer Rank: Gold　Magic Resist　3180 > 4000

Heroine. Bunny Girl. Perky, energetic, frivolous. But has recently turned into a splendid person. Demi-humans are unable to use magic, but Shia is able to directly manipulate magic despite that. Has no magical aptitude, but can use body strengthening to a degree that makes her a bugged character. Disappointing beauty + rabbit + desu + naive attributes.

未来視　　Future Sight

[＋自動発動]　　＋ Automatic Invocation

[＋仮定未来]　　＋ Future Prediction

[＋天啓視]　　＋ Divine Revelation Sight

魔力操作　　Magic Manipulation

[＋身体強化]　　＋ Body Strengthening

[＋部分強化]　　＋ Specific Strengthening

[＋変換効率上昇III]　　＋ Conversion Efficiency Up III

[＋集中強化]　　＋ Concentration Strengthening

重力魔法	Gravity Magic
空間魔法	Space Magic
再生魔法	Regeneration Magic
魂魄魔法	Spirit Magic

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* Weapon names (German/German pronounciation):

ドリュッケン　Drücken ("Press"), sledgehammer + shotgun

* Divine Revelation Sight:

Can glimpse a few seconds ahead into the future. Unlike Future Prediction it doesn't consume magic so it can be continuously active.

* Conversion Efficiency Up III:

Converts magic to physical stats (Str/Vit/Res/Agi) at a 1:3 ratio (ie: 3800 = +11400).

Tio Kurarusu　Strength　770 > 880 [+Dragon Form 4620 > 8800]

563 yo F　Vitality　1100 > 1250 [+Dragon Form 6600 > 12500]

Guardian (守護者)　　Resist　　1100 > 1250 [＋Dragon Form 6600 > 12500]

Lv 89 > 93　　Agility　　580 > 700 [＋Dragon Form 3480 > 7000]

ch 67 > 122　　Magic　　4590 > 4990

Adventurer Rank: Gold　Magic Resist　　4220 > 4620

Pervert. Hajime opened a new door for her when he used his Pile Bunker on her weak spot. A prudent, intellectual, mature spirit... or should have been. Heroine. no ja + kimono + watermelons + shapeshifter attributes.

竜化　　Dragon Form

[＋竜鱗硬化]　　+ Dragonscale Hardening

[＋魔力効率上昇]　　+ Magic Efficiency Up

[＋身体能力上昇II]　　+ Body Ability Up II

[＋咆哮]　　+ Roar

[＋風纏]　　+ Wind Armor (Wind Clad)

[＋痛覚変換II]　　+ Pain Control II

魔力操作　　Magic Manipulation

[＋魔力放射]　　+ Magic Emission

[＋魔力圧縮]　　+ Magic Compression

[＋遠隔操作]　　+ Remote Control

火属性適性　　Fire Element Aptitude

[＋魔力消費減少]　　＋ Mana Consumption Reduction

[＋効果上昇]　　＋ Effect Up

[＋持続時間上昇]　　＋ Duration Up

風属性適性　　Wind Element Aptitude

[＋魔力消費減少]　　＋ Mana Consumption Reduction

[＋効果上昇]　　＋ Effect Up

[＋持続時間上昇]　　＋ Duration Up

[＋雷属性]　　＋ Lightning Element

複合魔法　　Compound Magic

再生魔法　　Regeneration Magic

魂魄魔法　　Spirit Magic

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* Dragonscale Hardening: (ch.67)

Hardness can be increased by expending magic. Can also increase Dragon Form's base stats and resistances.

* Pain Control II:

High level ability to freely convert pain into energy, increasing all stats. In addition it is possible to store the converted energy. However the energy can only be stored when still feeling lingering pain.

* Lightning Element:

Lightning magic is classified as higher ranked wind magic, this allows lightning magic to be used at the same level as wind magic.

Shirasaki Kaori (白崎香織) Strength 280 > 1200

17 yo F Vitality 460 > 1200

Healer (治癒師) Resist 360 > 1200

Lv 72 > 10 Agility 380 > 1200

ch 71 > 122 Magic 1380 > 1200

Magic Resist 1380 > 1200

Heroine. An unfortunate, regular schoolgirl that had her love interest, Hajime, stolen from her... or so it seems. Feelings of love for Hajime sprouted during her second year of middle school. Became consciously aware of her feelings after Hajime fell into the abyss. When they reunited, forcibly joined the party when she became aware of Yue stealing Hajime away. Currently possessing the body of the Apostle of God, Nointo. Classmate + airhead + Stand (JoJo reference to her Hannya

mask)

＋ pitiable attributes.

回復魔法　　Recovery Magic

[＋回復効果上昇]　　＋ Effect Up

[＋回復速度上昇]　　＋ Recovery Speed Up

[＋イメージ補強力上昇]　　＋ Image Reinforcement Power Up

[＋浸透看破]　　＋ Osmosis Penetration [?]

[＋範囲回復効果上昇]　　＋ Effect Range Up

[＋遠隔回復効果上昇]　　＋ Remote Recovery Effect Up

[＋状態異常 回復効果上昇]　　＋ Abnormal Status Recovery Effect Up

[＋消費魔力減少]　　＋ Magic Consuption Down

[＋魔力効率上昇]　　＋ Magic Efficiency Up

[＋連続発動]　　＋ Consecutive Invocation

[＋複数同時発動]　　＋ Multiple Invocation

[＋遅延発動]　　＋ Delayed Invocation

[＋付加発動]　　＋ Addition Invocation

光属性適性　　Light Element Aptitude

[＋発動速度上昇]　　＋ Movement Speed Up

[＋効果上昇]　　＋ Effect Up

[＋持続時間上昇]　　＋ Duration Up

[＋連続発動] ＋ Consecutive Invocation

[＋複数同時発動] ＋ Multiple Invocation

[＋遅延発動] ＋ Delayed Invocation

高速魔力回復 High-speed Magic Recovery

[＋瞑想] ＋ Meditation

再生魔法 Regeneration Magic

魂魄魔法 Spirit Magic

言語理解 Language Comprehension

双大剣術 Greatsword Dual-wielding Proficiency

分解能力 Disintegration Ability (Decomposition Ability)

全属性適性 All Elements Aptitude

複合魔法 Compound Magic

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* The broken greatswords and wargear were replaced by Hajime.

* Nointo's enchantment, infinite magic supply and pseudo-Limit Break are disabled.

* Original Apostle's stats are all 12000. Kaori doesn't have full control of the body yet.

Amanokawa Kouki *	Strength	880 > 1020
17 yo M	Vitality	880 > 1020
Hero (勇者)	Resist	880 > 1020
Lv 72 > 83	Agility	880 > 1020
ch 71 > 122	Magic	880 > 1020
	Magic Resist	880 > 1020

(*天之河光輝) Hero (lol). A bundle of good and justice. However since he never thinks he's wrong, he has a bad habit of interpreting adverse situations to his own convenience. Kaori, Shizuku and Ryutaro are childhood friends.

全属性適正	All Elements Aptitude
[＋光属性効果上昇]	＋ Light Element Effect Up
[＋発動速度上昇]	＋ Movement Speed Up
全属性耐性	All Elements Resistance
[＋光属性効果上昇]	＋ Light Element Effect Up
物理耐性	Physical Resistance
[＋治癒力上昇]	＋ Recovery Power Up
[＋衝撃緩和]	＋ Impact Allevation
複合魔法	Compound Magic

剣術　　Sword Proficiency

[＋無念無想]　　＋ Clear Mind

剛力　　Herculean Strength

縮地　　Shukuchi (Instant Movement/Flicker/Ground Shrink)

[＋爆縮地]　　＋ Explosive Shukuchi

先読　　Foresight

高速魔力回復　　High-speed Magic Recovery

気配感知　　Perception

魔力感知　　Magic Perception

限界突破　　Limit Break (x3 all stats buff)

[＋覇潰]　　＋ Supreme Destruction (x5 all stats buff)

言語理解　　Language Comprehension

Yaegashi Shizuku *　　Strength　　450 > 650

17 yo F　　Vitality　　560 > 760

Swordswoman (剣士)　　Resist　　320 > 520

Lv 72 > 83　　Agility　　1110 > 1480

ch 71 > 122　　Magic　　380 > 580

Magic Resist　　380 > 580

(*八重樫雫) I wonder if she's a heroine... Best friend of Kaori. Kouki and Ryutaro's childhood friend. Her home is a kendo dojo. Primary feature of this dignified girl is her ponytail. Has an excellent grasp of human subtleties and relationships, her innate personality won't let her ignore trouble around her giving her a lot of hardships [?]. Recently though she's been depending too much on someone else...

剣術	Sword Skill
[＋斬撃速度上昇]	＋ Slashing Speed Up
[＋抜刀速度上昇]	＋ Drawing Sword Velocity Up
[＋無拍子]	＋ Mubyoushi
縮地	Shukuchi (Instant Movement/Flicker/Ground Shrink)
[＋爆縮地]	＋ Explosive Shukuchi
[＋重縮地]	＋ Heavy Shukuchi [?]
[＋震脚]	＋ Seismic Leg
[＋無拍子]	＋ Mubyoushi
先読	Foresight
[＋投影]	＋ Projection
気配感知	Perception

隠業　　Hidden Action

[＋幻撃]　　＋ Phantom Strike

言語理解　　Language Comprehension

Sakagami Ryuutarou *　Strength　820 ＞ 980

17 yo M　Vitality　820 ＞ 980

Brawler (拳士)　Resist　680 ＞ 790

Lv 72 ＞ 83　Agility　550 ＞ 650

ch 71 ＞ 122　Magic　280 ＞ 350

Magic Resist　280 ＞ 350

(*坂上龍太郎) Muscle brain.

格闘術　　Martial Arts

[＋身体強化]　＋ Body Strengthening

[＋部分強化]　＋ Specific Strengthening

[＋集中強化]　＋ Concentrated Strengthening

[＋浸透破壊]　＋ Penetration Destruction

縮地　　Shukuchi (Instant Movement/Flicker/Ground Shrink)

[＋爆縮地]　＋ Explosive Shukuchi

物理耐性　Physical Resistance

[＋金剛]　＋ Vajra (Indestructible)

全属性耐性　All Elements Resistance

言語理解　Language Comprehension

Taniguchi Suzu (谷口鈴)　Strength　350

17 yo F　Vitality　450

Barrier Mage (結界師)　Resist　450

Lv 83　Agility　380

ch 122　Magic　820

Magic Resist　580

Chimikko. Mood maker of the class. Unsung hero of the Hero party. A dirty old man at heart.

結界術適性　Barrier Magic Aptitude

[＋魔力効率上昇]　＋ Mana Efficiency Up

[＋発動速度上昇]　＋ High-speed Invocation Up

[＋遠隔操作]　＋ Remote Control

[＋連続発動]　　＋ Continuous Activation

光属性適性　　Light Element Aptitude

[＋障壁適性連動]　　＋ Barrier Aptitude Link

言語理解　　Language Comprehension

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Supporting Characters

＝＝＝＝＝＝＝＝＝＝＝＝＝＝＝＝＝＝＝＝＝＝＝＝＝＝＝＝＝＝＝＝＝＝＝＝＝＝＝

Myu　　4 yo F

Little girl of the Sea-race. Was saved by Hajime from an underground Führen slave auction.

Her father died before she was born, so she comes to love the strong and kind Hajime as her

new father. She's so important to him that Hajime made a new oath. She likes ending her

sentences in "nano". With the exception of Yue, she is the only person Hajime is completely

weak against.

Remia　　24 yo F

Myu's mother. A gentle beauty. An undine widow whose soothes people with her "ara ara, ufufu".

Hajime often cannot tell whether she is serious or joking. Restrains

Hajime's party with her

mature woman charm.

Classmates

Hatayama Aiko (畑山愛子) 25 yo F, Farmer (作農師)

Social Studies teacher. Has a reverse harem of Temple Knights (though her head is full of

concern for her students so she doesn't notice).

Nakamura Eri (中村恵里) 17 yo F, Necromancer (降霊術師)

Betrayed her classmates to the demons. Used her original darkness magic "Soul Bind" to

manipulate countless numbers of dead puppet soldiers. Valuable Bokummusume [?].

Nagayama Jugo (永山重) 17 yo M, Heavy Brawler (重格闘家)

Frontline party leader. Old man face.

Nomura Kentaro (野村健太郎) 17 yo M, Earth Mage (土術師)

Nagayama party member. Best friends with Nagayama and Endo. Likes Ayako Tsuji.

Endo Kosuke (遠藤浩介) 17 yo M, Assassin (暗殺者)

Nagayama party member. Has an extremely weak presence. Isn't noticed by labyrinth monsters

or automatic doors.

Tsuji Ayako (辻綾子)　　17 yo F, Healer (治癒師)

Nagayama party member. Same class as Kaori, her healing skills are a bit more complex though.

Yoshino Mao (吉野真央)　　17 yo F, Enchanter (付与術士)

Nagayama party member. Unsung hero of the party.

Hiyama Daisuke (檜山大介)　　17 yo M, Light Warrior (軽戦士)

Leader of the bullies harassing Hajime. Perpetrator who dropped him into the abyss. Blackmailed

by Eri in the beginning, but later killed many of the country's knights and soldiers of his own

volition in order to obtain Kaori. He met a gruesome end when Hajime fed him alive to some

monsters after finally going to town on him.

Nakano Shinji (中野信治)　　17 yo M, Water Mage (水術師)

Hiyama gang member.

Saito Yoshiki (斎藤良樹)　　17 yo M, Wind Mage (風術師)

Hiyama gang member.

Kondo Reiichi (近藤礼一)　　17 yo M, Spear Warrior (槍術師)

Hiyama gang member. Became prey to Eri's Soul Bind.

Aikawa Noboru (相川昇) 17 yo M, -

Ai-chan bodyguard member.

Kawahara Akira (河原明) 17 yo M, -

Ai-chan bodyguard member.

Tamai Atsushi (玉井淳) 17 yo M, -

Ai-chan bodyguard member.

Sugawara Taeko (菅原妙子) 17 yo F, -

Ai-chan bodyguard member.

Miyazaki Nana (宮崎奈々) 17 yo F, -

Ai-chan bodyguard member.

Sonobe Yuka (園部優香) 17 yo F, -

Ai-chan bodyguard member.

Shimizu Yukitoshi (清水幸利) 17 yo M, Dark Mage (闇術師)

Raised an army of monsters to distinguish himself in this new world. As a result he was

left on the verge of death after a demon's suprise attack, after which Hajime terminated him.

Heilig Kingdom

Elhild = S = B = Heilig

King. Killed by Eri during the Imperial City invasion.

Luluaria = S = B = Heilig

Queen. Rarely appears, but assists in the background. Has an equally weak presence like a

certain someone [?].

Randell = S = B = Heilig

Prince. 10 yo. Handsome youth with blonde hair and blue eyes. Was infatuated with Kaori, but

gave up after meeting Hajime. Currently heartbroken from losing his first love.

Liliana = S = B = Heilig

Princess. 14 yo. Talented and enormously popular within the kingdom. Has been harbouring

feelings of love ever since she was saved by Hajime, however his treatment of her hasn't

changed so recently she's a rather pitiable character.

Meld = Loggins

Knight team captain. Died by Eri's hands. Most unfortunate death.

Jose = Rancaid

Knight vice-captain of the same team. Likewise killed by Eri.

Alan = Smith

Knight background character, regularly appears [?]. Also dead.

Kuzeri = Rail

New knight team captain. A woman knight originally serving as an Imperial Guard under Liliana.

Niito = Komorudo

New knight team vice-captain. Previously the commander of the third corps.

Adventurer Guild

Ilwa = Chang

Führen branch chief. Awarded Hajime a gold rank and provides him with support. A person who

gave Hajime a lot of work (trouble).

Dot = Clowe

Ilwa's head secretary. Like Shizuku, suffers a lot of hardships.

Catherine

Former head secretary of the guild master. An old lady that personifies the cruelty of time.

Loa = Bawabisu

Horuado branch chief. Tsundere.

Barusu = Raputa

Guild master. May have spells of destruction [?].

Ankaji Dukedom

Ranzi = Forward = Zengen

Ankaji dukedom's lord. Had a falling out with the church, (漢気溢れる) nice middle [?].

Bizu = Forward = Zengen

Ranzi's son. Attracted to Kaori. Facial expressions at the gunshot level when stared at [?].

Airi = Forward = Zengen

Bizu's sister. At 14 yo, overcame demi-human discrimination when she encountered Myu's

cuteness.

Haltina Sea of Trees, Faea Belgaen

Alferick = Hypist

Faea Belgaen elder. Chief of the Forest-race (Elves). Longest lived and easiest to talk with.

Zeru of the Tiger-race, Mao of the Winged-race, Rua of the Fox-race, Guze of the Earth-race

(Dwarves), Jin of the Bear-race

Background character elders. Jin never fully recovered from the blow Hajime delivered to his

abdomen.

Altena = Hypist

Granddaughter of Alfrick.

Regin = Banton

Middle-aged man from the Bear-race. Once lead a raid on the Haulia to take revenge for Jin but

had the tables turned. Afterwards developed a trauma of the Haulia, pulse rate and breathing

would elevate just thinking about it.

Haulia Tribe

Cam = Haulia

Shea's father, Chief of the Haulia tribe of the Rabbit-race. Hyahhaa chief. Chuuni chief.

Currently calling himself "Shadow demon hunter of the writhing abyss, Caamubantisu Erufanraito

Roooderia Haulia."

Baru

"Barudoferudo of Certain Destruction", 11 yo. Proud of his ranged weaponry skill. Infected

with chuunibyou.

Rana

"Ranainferina the Fleeting Shadow." Probably has a job requiring speed.

Mina

"Minasuteria the Sky Splitter." Probably has an air assassination attack.

Yao

"Yaozeriasu the Phantom Warrior." Probably uses illusions to manipulate his foes.

Yoru

"Yorugandaru the Creeping Death." Probably... y'know.

Riki

"Rikiddobureiku the Light Rain." Something or other.

Io

"Iorunikusu the Lightning Blade." Something or other.

Hoelscher Empire

Gahald = D = Hoelscher

Emperor.

Bias = D = Hoelscher

Crown Prince. Ririana's fiance. Beheaded after he raised a ruckus.

Nediru

Formerly a jailer in the imperial army. Had his nether regions crushed beyond recognition.

Master

Imperial capital (Adventurer Guild) branch bartender. Tenpure guardian [?].

Demon-race

Furiido = Baguaa (Freed)

Red haired, dark skinned, slightly pointed ear male of the demon-race. Mass-produces powerful

demons, possesses space magic from the Age of Gods. His white dragon minions are particularly

powerful, they plunged Hajime into a crisis with their Aurora Breath ability during an ambush.

God Faction

Nointo, Apostle of God

Soldier of God that boasts phenomenal stats. Able to fight more than evenly against Hajime in

her Limit Break state. Appears at turning points in history to enact the will of God, either to

manipulate the masses or eliminating those who are obstacles to God's plan. Hajime wonders if

there are more apostles. Probably.

Ishtar Rangobarudo

Pope of the Sacred Church. Old man. Lost cause.

David = Mark

Aiko's escort team, temple knight captain. After many troubles, became head of Aiko's reverse

harem (although it seems fruitless as Aiko doesn't pay any attention to them).

Chase = Routine

Aiko's escort team, temple knight. Likewise reverse harem member.

Ehito, Human-race god

Aruvu, Demon-race god

Other

Motto = Yunker

A true merchant.

Sohna

Brook town, Masaka inn poster girl. Goes to great lengths to peep at Hajime's love affairs.

Her techniques are already far beyond the level of a town girl.

Christabel

Clothing store monster (drag queen). Former gold-rank adventurer. Possesses strength beyond

common sense.

Mariabelle

Clothing store monster II. Embarked on a new path after Yue's groin smash.

Fosu Seruo

Owner of the Water Fairy inn at the Lakeshore town, Ur. Serves Japanese-style cuisine.

Will Kudeta

Third son of the Count Kudeta house. Oedipus complex.

Riiman

Human-faced fish monster. Can communicate via magic. (漢気溢れる) old man [?]. At first

glance seems to be a world-travelling free spirit, but is actually a deadbeat father that

neglected his wife and children whilst playing around.

Uorupen = Stark

Heilig kingdom chief supervising transmuter. True craftsman. Will to go beyond his limits in

order to learn new techniques.

Liberators

Oscar = Orcus

Master of the Orcus Great Labyrinth (Abyss). In charge of creation magic. This unfortunate

man's corpse was planted in a corner of a crop field.

Miredi = Raisen

Master of the Raisen Great Labyrinth (Great Canyon). In charge of gravity magic. Most annoying

person in the universe. A unique personality amongst the Liberators.

Naizu = Guryuuen

Master of the Guryuuen Great Labyrinth (Great Volcano). In charge of space magic.

Meiru = Merujiine

Master of the Merujiine Great Labyrinth (Undersea Ruins). In charge of regeneration magic.

Sea-race. Contrary to appearances, is rather crude.

Rausu = Baan

Master of the Baan Great Labyrinth (God Mountain). In charge of spirit magic. Bald.

Shunee = ? (Shune ?)

Master of the Shunee Great Labyrinth (Snowfield Ice Cave). In charge of ? magic. Dungeon

located in demon-race territory in the south.

Luluo = Haltina

Master of the Haltina Great Labyrinth (Sea of Trees). In charge of ? magic. Dungeon located in

demi-human territory in the east.

Translator Notes:

Arifureta Shokugyou de Sekai Saikyou

("From Common Job Class to the Strongest in the World")

- Web novel raws: http://ncode.syosetu.com/n8611bv/

- Chapter 122 link: http://ncode.syosetu.com/n8611bv/122/

- Shia image (@bottom): http://ncode.syosetu.com/n8611bv/49/

- AnimeSuki Forum Thread: http://forums.animesuki.com/showthread.php?t=124566

Transporting the Demi-humans

This is not meant to be a perfect translation, I cannot read japanese characters and this was carefully edited based on translations I got from my Machine Translator. Therefore, there are bound to be errors here and there! At best, this could be considered as an unedited Final Draft towards an Official Translation

The wind was roaring and howling, and the ground underneath was quickly flowing backwards.

The Demi-humans that the Empire had released were wondering whether what they're currently experience was really reality or not, to confirm it, they've pinched their cheeks many times to the point of becoming teary eyed. And, they were unsettled as if declaring, I'm not waking up from my dream~, once again, they looked at the unrealistic scene. Although it's sometimes referred as, escaping from reality.

They were currently boarded on a "basket" that Hajime had installed onto the bottom of the "Flying Airship", "Feruniru", and are currently experiencing their first time traveling by air.

Feruniru was as expected, not on the scale of being able to allow thousands of Demi-humans to board, so a large basket was quickly installed. Image-wise, it looked just like an airship gondola.

Actually, the gate hall was set up for Fair Bergen and the Hauria's hidden town, although it was possible to get to the Sea of Tree's instantly after opening a gate, they daringly chose to travel by air for the sake of setting up the stage. That way, there'll be much more impact of the Demi-human's being set free by the Empire.

As it was, there was need for someone to assure the words at the open space from last time, “Releasing the Demi-humans were God’s will”. The spectacle of a huge flying object turning towards the skies to return home was required to completely fool the Empire citizens.

but, as the price, Hajime who started up Feruniru was faced with a harsh burden from having so much people loaded on. While gushing out red magical power on the bench seat in the bridge, laying on his back with his legs stretched out languidly was not the embodiment of arrogance.

As expected, to pilot the ship with thousands of people boarded on, their accumulated weight which forced his magic consumption to drain out was definitely not half-assed.

However, while his magical powers were gradually drained away, with the current situation he decided to train his magical ability to efficiently operate magical power through his consciousness with much effort, however the cause of his languidity was likely not just due to the magic consumption though.

To others it would just look like someone was being lazy but, it was actually a person’s effort to train whenever possible. It was really hard to tell the difference……

Yue, Shia, and Kaori were attending and beside Hajime. Though Hajime’s appearance was that of a father becoming lazy while sitting on a bench as his child plays at the park on a holiday, at his right arm was Yue, on his left was Shia using it as a pillow, and

Kaori who was fiddling with his hair from the back of the seat.

He was really training seriously but……there would be no rebuttals that the scene looked just like a guy with his Harem.

[Oi oi, that's quite the attitude while in front of the Emperor, eh?]

[……Nagumo-kun, although I'm only saying it…..I think you should respect yourself a bit more?]

[How enviou……I mean. Right. it's indecent]

Though he was concentrating on training to operate his magical powers efficiently, unconsciously Yue and Shia were patting his head as the voices multiplied towards Hajime.

In order to swear the oath in front of Fair Bergen's elders, Gaharudo, the Emperor of the Hoelscher Empire accompanied them, Ririana accompanied them as a member of the royal family of the same human beings to witness the oath as a princess of the Hairhi Kingdom, and the usual Shizuku. Of course, Kouki, Ryutaro, and Suzu was also there.

And another person as well, Teio who was asked by Gaharudo to show him around on the airship was also there but, when she returned and saw Yue and them, [Mistress as well～], she declared to Hajime and began carrying out the ruOndaibu *It's a reference which I can't make out, とハジメにル○ンダイブを決行し*, sensing what was about to happen Hajime used his legs to strangle her and without a problem she dropped to the ground. Although her eye whites were showing and she was slightly convulsing, there were no problems.

[Ah~, did you finish exploring the warship?]

[Yeah, it's quite ridiculous. I have absolutely no idea how this mass of metal is able to fly. But, its extremely interesting! Oi, Hajime Nagumo. Prepare an aircraft for us. I'll pay whatever you ask for]

Gaharudo sat on the bench and faced towards him, his eyes were shining star-like in curiosity at Hajime. Shizuku and them also sat on the seats.

By the way, Shizuku and Ririana were sitting right next to hajime. Though Gaharudo was a bit unpleased, but his eyes were shining like a little boy and he didn't care much about it. He seems to have greatly liked this airship.

[I have no need for stuff like money. Give it up. This is going to be the only time you're getting on board. Do your best to enjoy the time you have right now]

[Don't say that. Na? Just one, even a small plane is fine]

[There's no merit in it for me though]

[Nugu~u, if money is no good then how about women! One of my daughters was finally becoming just the right age. Though she has quite a lot of pride, her beauty is top-tier. I'll add her into your harem so, na? It'll be nice right?]

It appears that Gaharudo thought Hajime was an unparalleled playboy. It was sad that situationally it was something that couldn't be denied.

However, it would be troublesome to suddenly be handed a woman so Hajime was about to reject while laughing but, the females reacted quicker than him.

[[[[[No(desu*Shia*)(ja*Teio*)!!]]]]]

[……And there you have it]

[Chi, you're just showing off…..n? Princess Ririana, just now, didn't you also react?]

Gaharudo sulked and clicked his tongue and turned his line of sight towards Ririana and noticed. Allured by that, the others also turn towards Ririana.

[Eh? N, no way. Are you sure you weren't mistaken?]

[……Kukuku. Come to think of it, at the party, you were having much more fun dancing with Hajime Nagumo than with Bias. Oi oi, Hajime Nagumo. Aren't you moving along too quickly? Even I'm amazed at your speed]

[*She actually repeats Nya, but english-wise it doesn't make sense like it did with Hajime's name in the chapter 120 lol*Whawhawhawhat are you talking about! Me and Nagumo-san absolutely don't have that kind of relationship! R, right? Ne? Nagumo-san!]

[Ah? Ah~, it's as impossible as the heavens overturning itself]

[……You didn't have to take it that far……]

Towards Hajime clear objection, the riled up and increasing tension that Ririana had was immediately cut down. She looked away at something sulkingly. From that attitude, Ririana understood that she had no chance……

Or rather, in her heart she was looking back towards the dance from the party. Hajime should have been thinking about it too but, to completely put down the person in question on the spot, glances of sympathy was looked at Ririana, then towards Hajime.

[……Why do I have to be looked at with those kinds of eyes. In the first place, the princess is something like a married woman. Although her fiance was beheaded, that doesn't mean that her marriage with the royal family was lost. That's why, eventually she'll be paired up with another royalty right?]

[Ah~, about that…..]

On behalf of Ririana who had the expression of having chewed hundreds of bitter insects and worms, Gaharudo answered.

[Being completely honest, my clan is currently not in the position for that kind of thing. After all, we have to wear these necklaces throughout our entire lives or else we'll die, we've got to deal with the many ridiculous situations that arose]

Just like Garuda had said, a necklace with a red gem was definitely on his neck.

[From the contents of that oath, even if someone else other than the royalty disobeys the contract, the royal family will "judge accordingly by the law" to the best we can, our lives are connected

now, as it is, it doesn't change the fact that the lives of the public have also been grasped. A radical reform of punishment needs to be created in order to enforce the laws, and all the other towns besides the Empire needs to know of the law as well……everyone here and there are desperate right now]

As Gaharudo leaned back deeply into the backrest of the seat, he scratched his head as if saying, [I'm lost!].

[Now that I don't know when we'll be dying, I can't afford to have the princess of another kingdom marry in, there's absolutely no other choice. moreover, we've lost manpower because of the emancipation of the Demi-humans. There's people fussing about everywhere. We also need manpower in correspondence towards suppressing the public, honestly, it's a situation where the Empire actually wants to ask (. . . . .) for the Kingdom's support instead]

[I see. In other words you're taking back the marriage proposed to the princess?]

[Ma~a, that's about it. We need to calm down the situation and confirm the safety of the royal family first, then once that happens, this time, it would be a better idea for his highness Randell……or rather Majesty now…. to marry with a princess instead]

Towards Gaharudo's explanation, everyone present gave off a, [Heh~] expression.

By the way, actually, one of the royalty screamed out, [As if there's any truth to that foolish talk! I'll be removing this necklace!], and they really removed their necklace, afterwards, they suddenly turned mad and rampaged around, and as if their threads were cut, they died on the spot, this was the reason why the royalty began to work desperately.

[Isn't that great then! Riri!]

[It really is. Freedom to love…..might actually still be impossible but, for the time being, you've gained time]

[Un un. I'm glad for you, Riri]

With Kouki first, the members glanced at Ririana with a gentle gaze. Ririana showed a bitter smile towards her friends who were glancing at her, pleased without reserve that the "marriage had been cleared up". Oddly enough, Gaharudo also showed a wry smile.

[With that, Hajime Nagumo. Right now princess Ririana is currently free*english accent*? If you want, the Empire will cooperate with you with all it's might]

[Na~!? Your Majesty! What are you saying! I, I'm not……]

Gaharudo was grinning from ear to ear as he said it. Once again Ririana was riled up.

However, Hajime was taking the contents of the talk lightly and turned an amazed expression towards Gaharudo. He had enough of Ririana's current attitude.

[Then, I'll have to give you an airship in return? No matter how you look at it there are no merits…..rather, isn't it a demerit?]

[Just what are you implying!? Nagumo-san!]

[Oi oi, she's the princess of a country? Normally, it's a place that men can't even reach]

[Wait a second, did you two hear what I just said? Are you guys listening to me!]

[Don't group me with you. I have no hobbies to collect women. Princess is only a title, rather it'll only cause troubles]

[Hai-hai-hai, you guys definitely didn't listen. No one here listened to me. …..~Gusu~……what exactly is a princess I wonder…..]

[Riri……it's alright…..U~u, you're a princess so don't worry]

[Ri, Riri! I heard you properly, so! Show some spirit!]

Ririana was completely through with Hajime and Gaharudo's discussion, Ririana finally began writing characters on her seat in a negligent manner. At the edge of her eye, something was gathering and sparkling. Then Shizuku and Kouki were desperately trying to cheer her up.

Disregarding Ririana and them, Hajime was currently groaning, [Unununu], and Gaharudo who was trying to negotiate with him let out a sigh.

[I have nothing I want right now, just give it up. Eventually, just maybe, you'll find something worth negotiating over……so just wait patiently until that time]

[Nu~uuu, you really have nothing that you want? Anything you want done? Just honestly say it out. Humans always have wants. It's always been decided that someone who says that they don't want anything are either no longer human or just scheming something behind the scenes. …..Ah~, that's right, you were a monster]

[You trying to pick a fight? ……..Ma~a, I can understand what you mean. But…..]

As Hajime was saying that, he jerked and embraced both Yue and Shia.

[What I really want is already in my arms. “Having them with me at all times” is already enough to fill my entire head, I can’t think of anything “more” than that. Probably for life]

That’s why-, Hajime expressed that negotiations were useless. Yue was so happy she brought her body closer, Shia’s eyes were opened wide to have also been forcefully held like Yue, in the next moment her Usamimi and bunny tail began wagging back and forth and she threw her arms around Hajime.

On Hajime’s chest, Yue’s and Shia’s eyes met, both of them both laughed, [Kufufu], and smiled at one another.

[Ah~, ah~, I get it, I get it. Chi, it’s way too sweet for my mouth to handle. I guess I’ll go and enjoy the scenery on the deck…..]

Gaharudo got up with an annoyed look and quickly left the bridge. Hajime was smiling wryly. After seeing the face-to-face discussion, Kouki and Ryutaro didn’t know what to do and let their eyes wander around. Suzu let out an odd voice, [Howa~].

And a voice came out from behind Hajime and his legs.

[Uu~, it's unfair that it's only Yue and Shia! Ne, ne~e, Hajime-kun. "In my arms" is a metaphorical expression right? It's not only limited to Yue and Shia right? Ne?]

[Ma, master. Although I got to experience your wonderful foot technique, will you not hold mistress closely either? "In my arms" would be nice……]

Kaori clung onto Hajime from behind, she was desperately trying to appeal for her existence. Teio sat up and pleaded to Hajime with her chin on his knee.

The person who reacted to the two was Yue.

While getting up a little, she glanced towards Kaori and Teio.

[……How unfortunate]

[Wha, what do you mean!?]

[Mu~u, I can't ignore that just now, Yue!]

Kaori and Teio had an atmosphere as if they were chewing onto a handkerchief while letting out [Ki~iii!], as they looked at Yue who was expressionless. Yue inclined her neck as if she was thinking about something, then she slowly pointed at herself and Shia.

Then,

[……Winner]

Following that, she pointed at Kaori and Teio.

[……Loser]

And as expected, it was said with her expressionless face. Then as it was she snuggled her cheek against Hajime's chest. Then at that moment, a sound of something being cut "~Buchi~" could be heard within the bridge.

[Fu, fufufu….Yue's pretty weird right? suddenly saying things that don't make sense….she's surely broken somewhere?]

[That's right. That must be true. Then mistresses must fix it]

[Speaking of fixing, there's a simple way of doing it]

[Umu umu, broken things will…..]

[[Be fixed if hit! (No-ja!*Teio*)]]

They suddenly both stood up and overlooked down on Yue while smiling.

Extremely tensed*Doki as in the effect doki doki*? Fighting spirit*Toki*?-like began to overflow. From that pressure, Kouki, Ryutaro, and Suzu huddled together to brace themselves. Kouki began to whisper in a mutter, [Is, is that Kaori?].

Yue who was hit by both of their pressures, once again, smiled slightly which ruined her expressionless face and looked up.

[.....Stop it. If we seriously went at it, both of you have no chances of beating me]

Are you CodiOta*Unsure about what this reference is, コーディ○ーター* they wanted to tsukkomi her lines. And that was quite the intense provocation.

[[Just what we wanted! (Ja!)]]

Sure enough it caused Kaori and Teio to heat up even more. Yue also slowly got up.

[Wa, the three of you wait a second! To suddenly start fighting…..or rather, Nagumo-kun*lol whoops i didn't notice i had kun and san mixed up here, thanks gimme_breack and maniac88*! Stop them!]

Shizuku was sweatingly and flustered around trying to do her best to arbitrate the situation. And quickly came to the conclusion that she wouldn't be able to stop them herself! So she gave up and turned to ask for help from Hajime who was the cause of this dispute.

Hajime just casually said…..

[It’s impossible. I’m sluggish…..]

His magical power was already drastically decreased and he became sluggish. He didn’t seem to have any intentions of moving.

To begin with, a small quarrel was an everyday occurrence, rather it was more like a kind of communication for the girls, so Hajime didn’t pay much heed to it.

[P, people like you are~]

However, Shizuku was still oblivious towards her surroundings then, a cheek began to twitch.

Then, a hanya-voice called out to Shizuku.

[Shizuku-chan! Please take that back!]

[Ar~e? Since when did I get pulled into this!?]

Quite naturally, Shizuku’s participation in the war was decided.

[Sa~a, princess, let’s both step up together! You’re an barrier

expert right? I'll leave defences to you and Suzu over there!]

[Eh? Me as well!? Why!?]

[Suzu was also casually included!?]

Teio with her draconic strength held Suzu and Ririana's necks like a kitten and dragged them. [Princess…..I'm a princess…….], Ririana muttered out with empty feelings.

[……Shia, I'm entrusting you as the Vanguard]

[A, alright! I won't let anyone get near Yue-san!]

Full of spirit. It seemed that Shia served as Yue's vanguard. She got up from Hajime and started twirling her arm around.

[……Hajime, wait for a bit. I'm going to beat them and come back]

[O~h, do it in moderation~]

[……After we're done fighting we'll embrace again]

[Anytime is fine~]

[……N~]

With that, the female members (except for some) left towards the deck with the atmosphere filled with fighting spirit. Although the deck was a moderate size it couldn't be said to have actually been enough. Surely It'll likely be good battle training. It's necessary for Kaori to get used to Nointo's body so moving around is a good idea. Since there's no telling what kind of ordeals they'll be facing

at the great labyrinth, [Harutsuina Sea of Trees], it's good to train even if only a bit.

However it was unknown whether Yue and them had that in mind though.

After a while, roars and explosions were beginning to be heard. Kouki and them were startled. They had anxious expressions, wondering if it was really alright to just leave them as is.

[They're having fun huh~]

However, Hajime's impression was just that.

[……Or rather what's with you, Nagumo…..]

[As expected, you're quite outrageous….]

The bridge that was only filled with men now, after looking at the bored Hajime, Kouki and Ryutaro were half amazed and half concerned. He wasn't phased at all with that riot that the women started, it seemed to have been completely natural so they were impressed as men.

After that, Yue and their fight ended after terribly scaring the Demi-humans, and finally the Sea of Trees were beginning to appear up ahead. Although it sounded as if the first to scream out was the emperor…….it must have surely just been their

imaginations.

While quietly worrying for the emperor's safety, they began to prepare and land at the Sea of Trees.

~~~
~~~

elders were also helping out to split the work.

[Fu~u….Cam. Is our brethren truly coming back?]

[…..You're still saying that kind of thing. I'm not going to keep reassuring you every time you ask, just hurry up and finish preparing to accept them]

When Alfrerick began talking, as if the room was alive a person's presence appeared. Beside Alfrerick was the Haruia, Cam, who had concealed his presence.

Cam and the Hauria tribe came back through the gate ahead of Hajime and them to tell of the Demi-humans being liberated. And used the telepathy stones to increase efficiency of the preparations to accept in their people, that was their roles as volunteers.

[I know that. It's just that, it's still just to hard to believe. That Empire is really liberating our brethren……]

[That'll be proven in a few hours from now. Ma~a, I can understand your feelings. …..For us, if it wasn't for boss, never in our dreams did we think something of this scale could be done]

[Boss…..the qualified person---Nagumo Hajime, huh. If that story is true then, he is not just my granddaughter's but all of our brethren's savior. We'll have to think of a way to repay him…..]

[Boss probably doesn't expect any of those kinds of things. Rather than that, quickly move that hand of yours. The reports are stacking up again]

Cam who heard a report from the telepathy stone, glanced towards Alfrerick for an instant. Although something was said to Cam through the telepathy stone, he only looked out into space, his appearance had no openings at all either. On the contrary, intense drive appeared from his lack of presence.

They once had an expression of resignation towards their expectation of their clan being executed……you'd never think they were the same person. Their original gentle atmosphere was also nonexistent now, instead they had a sharpness that seemed that it would cut anyone who just touches them.

In fact, that sharpness had already been shown.

That was because as soon as Cam came to the elders and told them to prepare to accept in the slaves which will be liberated, no one, not even Alfrerick could believe his words but, on that occasion, one of the elders felt that Cam's behavior was irreverently and unpleasant, so they started throwing out words in contempt at Cam and even tried to get him to kneel down forcefully.

Even if they've avenged the Kumaninzoku before and helped out when Fair Bergen was attacked by the demons and empire, the values that the Usagininzoku were seen in where likely not able to change so quickly.

However, towards that action due to fixed values, he returned it with severe murderous intent. The moment that one of the elder's subordinates tried to touch Cam, just where were they hidden, simultaneously the Hauria tribe appeared and placed their blades on all of the elder's necks.

Naturally, the man who was about to confront cam also had a blade pointed at him, it turned into a situation where no one moved a muscle. Filled with murderous intent, if you spoke poorly, there's no doubt that they'll bear their fangs, Alfrerick was somehow able to resettle peace in that situation.

In an instant, they occupied Fair Bergen's elder meeting who carried the highest power, and, made them all breakout into cold sweat with their fierce murderous intent, for the time being they decided to trust them and see what happens. Or rather, they couldn't do anything but that. The Hauria's blades which were on the scruff of their necks were dangerous.

[Oji-sama*Grandfather*, preparation for the meals are complete. This is the quantity left after consumption]

A lovely voice just like a bell ranged out and pulled Alfrerick out of his recollection which made him break out in cold sweat.

[Mu, Arutena huh. Thanks for the hard work. But, you keep going back and forth*unsure, お前も帰って来てまだ間がないのだ*, don't stress yourself out]

[I'm just fine. My brethren are coming back, I can't just sit and do nothing]

Arutena took on a resolute attitude as Alfrerick was worrying. However, after passing on the report to Alfrerick, strangely she began to fidget restlessly. Though Alfrerick was dubious, he noticed that his granddaughter was frequently glancing towards Cam, and

somehow guessed what she had in mind.

[If you're anxious about him, how about hearing about it from Cam?]

[! N, no, I wasn't particularly thinking about Nagumo-san……]

[However, I never said anything about a man did I?]

[Oji-sama! No way, please don't find faults in others words like a meanie!]

Alfrerick was visibly pleased while watching his granddaughter who was restless, he may have been serious about it?-she thought.

Due to Arutena's personality and figure, there have been many marriage proposals since her birth but, up until now she's rejected them all, the person in question wanted to follow in her grandfather's footsteps and work for the country rather than thinking about marriage. That's why he had never had this kind of discussion until now…..

From within Alfrerick, his foolishness and teasing as a grandfather started to rise up.

[Fumu, that man is definitely your benefactor but, he doesn't think of you as special? Or rather, to be specific he was helping out the Hauria tribe? Although you shouldn't think too much into it…..it'll be difficult to get him to become your partner]

[I've already said it~, it's not like that! Mou~! I heard that Nagumo-sama was bringing back our brethren, so I was only a bit

interested about it. Yes, that's the only reason!]

With a puffed out face, Arutena started to leave the room and Alfrerick secretly let out a sigh.

Then, at that time, Cam who was quiet until then, unexpectedly called out to Arutena.

[Miss Arutena]

[Eh, ehtto, yes? Cam-san. What is it?]

Cam had a smile as if he was amused at something which made Arutena reply back wryly. Cam reported smiling as he saw Arutena who was cautious.

[Although it seems as if boss allows many women to serve him, the fact is, he's fairly single-minded. And, the "special" positions have already been covered, as so, it's immovable. It's possible to get closer towards those seats but, you'd likely need a substantial amount of trust for that]

[Wa, ha～a…..Ehtto]

Cam was fearlessly grinning at the puzzled Arutena.

[By the way, according to boss's actions, the closest person towards that seat is……my daughter Shia. After all, the reason why he helped us bear our fangs at the Empire was because, "For the sake

of Shia's smile to not become clouded" he said]

[! Is, is that so?]

[That's right. If it was for Shia's sake, Boss would take on a country's army. Right, all for Shia's sake. Fufufu]

[!]

Arutena sensitively guess that he was basically implying, [You can't win against my daughter!].

Actually, Arutena was the same age of Shia who was 16 years old. Therefore, having been compared with another girl of her age and told that she wouldn't even be a proper match…… there was no helping that she was angry.

[When you say Shia-san…..you're talking about the one with the pale bluish hair right. Allow me to say that I don't think I'm inferior to her. Though there is definitely a difference in the amount of time spent together…...even I would, with the same amount of time given to me……]

[*light hearted no's*Iya, iya, our Shia is an extremely special existence, as expected, miss Arutena should stop from doing such useless things for your own sake, allow me to give you some advice. If you miss the marriageable age it'll become a very bleak thing]

[That's uncalled for!]

[Ha~a. Cam, would you leave the teasing of my granddaughter at that……]

The huffing mad Arutena and the grinning Cam. Alfrerick let out a grand sigh as he looked at the two.

The reason why Cam was provoking Arutena was because he was a bit meddlesome.

Of course, he was not going against Arutena, he was going against Shia. The relationship of Shia and Hajime when they left the Sea of Trees could be said that Shia was rushing it. That is, as long as you're looking at appearances only, Cam had felt that their relationship had become quite intimate. After one push, make sure to rush straight beyond the goal!

That one push, in other words it was a detonator for Arutena to start scheming, If Shia had heard it, [That's extremely uncalled for!] she'd say in anger.

Cam chuckled to himself as he had lit up Arutena's feelings of rivalry. The appearance of a girl whos decided to love without hesitation and resort to anything was…..incredibly devilish.

Then, at that time, all of the sudden the outside became noisy. It wasn't the same noise from running around like before, it was the noisiness of tension from an unexpected situation. They even began to hear roars.

[What's going on!]

Alfrerick suddenly stood up from his seat and walked up to the window. Then he saw the cause of the commotion.

[Pillars….of….light?]

Exactly according to those words, light as strong as the sunlight during daytime was shining down onto the trees, no, the light was incomparably strong, that, rather than just the trees it lit up past them and lit up the plaza of Fair Bergen.

The situation was currently unknown, Alfrerick had his eyes wide opened and a calm voice resounded.

[Don’t worry, Alfrerick. Boss has arrived]

Right, the identity of the light which illuminated Fair Bergens plaza, was the searchlight of the airship “Feruniru” which has arrived in the skies of Fair Bergen.

Night of Fair Bergen

This is not meant to be a perfect translation, I cannot read japanese characters and this was carefully edited based on translations I got from my Machine Translator. Therefore, there are bound to be errors here and there! At best, this could be considered as an unedited Final Draft towards an Official Translation

An intense light poured down over Fair Bergen just like a barrier.

Demi-humans were running away in different directions when the plaza was lit up by the pillar of light, they were all watching from afar with nervous expressions of what's to come.

Similarly, soldiers surrounded the plaza while having an expression cramped with fear.

Bekibeki～, Baki～, Beki～!! *Sound of branches breaking*

Immediately afterwards, a scream-like sound was emitted by the tree's overhead as they broke. [Goodness gracious, has a new monster appeared!], as Fair Bergen's residents took a forward stance, it appeared.

What they saw first was a huge mass of metal. Gradually lowering it's altitude and finally the residents of Fair Bergen noticed that it was a gondola. Afterwards, the appearance of a devilfish-like airship "Feruniru" was seen. The ground was illuminated by the two powerful searchlights which were attached to the bottom of its front and back in order to look for a safe place to land.

The surrounding people could do nothing but simply open their eyes and mouths widely in astonishment, Feruniru slowly lowered the gondola to the ground and purges it, then it landed beside the gondola.

The plaza was completely filled up with the gondola and Feruniru and the surrounding people took distance from it in a panic. At the same time, they had a, what's going to happen now, face filled with unease as they looked.

Then, at that time, the front and back of the rectangular shaped gondola suddenly opened up. The Demi-humans were startled. The soldier's hands which held their weapons were drenched in sweat and, ~Gokuri~, the sound of their throats could be heard. Their expressions stiffened up when they thought about what might jump out of the gondola which was wrapped in darkness.

Among the residence's gazes, what appeared from the atmosphere timidly was……an Usagininzoku girl. With that, the residents expressions turned into bewilderment. In that situation where the residents couldn't process and understand yet, Demi-humans appeared one after another from the darkness.

Those who came out from the gondola in succession, all equally looked around their surroundings with a slightly unbelieveable expression. In the serene silence of the cool air, vigorously, along with the security they felt while surrounded by trees, the nostalgic lights of Fair Bergen, and the sight of their brethren who they believed they'd never see again.

Although they were still in a stunned state like vegetation absorbing water, they were gradually realising. “We’ve finally returned to our hometown” is what they said.

Fair Bergen’s residents were also the same as well.

A woman hesitatingly advanced ahead slowly. It was a middle-aged woman who had dropped down inumimis. She had tears accumulating in the corners of her eyes and gently called out the name which she thought was lost.

[.....Zack, are you Zack?]

The one who reacted to that voice was a boy who similarly had dropped down inumimis. It was that boy which Kouki had worried about at the Empire. Once the boy caught the appearance of the woman, his face crumpled up into tears and started running out.

[Ka-san!*Mom*]

[Zack!]

As the woman knelt down and expanded out her arms, the boy leaped into her chest. The woman who was called, mother, was tightly embracing her son within her arms to confirm that it wasn’t a fantasy. And the parent and child had tears flowing out of delight from their miraculous reunion.

During the period of the parent and child's reunion, the Demi-humans and residents realized that they've returned and shouted out in joy which shook the ground as they ran towards each other, family and friends were releasing a powerfully bright voice every time they met up with acquaintances and lovers who were safe.

Fair Bergen was wrapped up in great joy, the usual quiet tranquility suddenly disappeared and a festival-like racket began.

Inside of the clamor of Demi-humans which was filled with overflowing smiles, Alfrerick as well as the other elders came running up to Hajime and them who got off Feruniru.

[Boy…..you had a completely unexpected appearance]

[N? Ahh, Alfrerick huh. Ma~a, there were various bothersome things so overlook it for me]

When Alfrerick looked overhead at the trees which folded and broke, he showed a wry smile as he talked, Hajime was scratching his cheek and had a slightly embarrassed expression.

From the skies of the Sea of Trees, the idea to descend down onto and crushing the trees without question just to enter from the outside of the Sea of Trees because using a gate to transfer everyone was too troublesome was due to careless judgement from his magical power being reduced to almost nothing.

However, because Hajime had been impressed by Fair Bergen's beautiful scenery, as expected there's was a slight feeling of having

done something bad.

[Sorry, Yue. Can I rely on you?]

[N…..leave it to me]

When Hajime called out to Yue by his side, Yue's lips loosened into a wry smile and she extended out her right arm overhead.

["Absolute Imitation"] *That's what I'm calling it, 絶象*

Reproduction magic "Absolute Imitation". It's a magic which restores all destruction regardless of whether it was organic or inorganic matter.

The moment Yue activated the magic, the tree's overhead immediately regained their former appearances. The elders exposed absentminded expressions towards the irrational magic which they witnessed. Only Alfrerick was able to guess that it was due to obtaining new Age of Gods magic and he massaged his forehead wrinkles like he was tired.

[Oji-sama, although I sympathize with your feelings, it's about time we should…….]

[Mu, that's right. Boy…..no, Nagumo-dono. I've roughly heard of the circumstances from Cam. Though it was unbelievably sudden, it appears that my brethren have really been released. we've likely just experienced a historical moment right now. First of all, as Fair Bergen's representative, I thank you]

[That's what you say but, the ones who did everything was the Hauria tribe. Please don't make mistakes here?]

Hajime gave a warning towards Alfrerick's words as he was indifferently putting the gondola and Feruniru back away into the "Treasure Warehouse". Suddenly the enormous objects from the plaza disappeared and the people who were expressing their joys began blinking their eyes. Then they paid attention towards Hajime and them who were facing the Elders.

[Ahh, of course. To begin with if the Haruia tribe wasn't here, Fair Bergen may have been completely obliterated from the previous attack. Considering that as well, there's nothing else to believe. Fufu~, never in my long life…..did I ever expect that it would be the weakest and banished Haruia tribe that would have defeated the Empire]

The Hauria tribe challenged the Empire to a fight and came out victorious and they even rescued all the brethren----that fact having been stated from Alfrerick's mouth made the residents realise who the people that allowed them to reunite with their important people were.

They turned their attention to Cam who was standing next to Alfrerick with a straightened back. What dwelled in their eyes was not contempt at the weakest race but, great awe and respect of looking at a hero.

When Cam notices those glances, as if he had thought of something a mischievous smile appeared on his lips and he slowly raised his right hand. And as if saying, [Come over here!], he bent his fingertips. It was a hand signal which they used when they invaded

the castle.

In that instant, it seemed like someone would instinctively tsukkomi, [*light hearted no's* Iya, Iya, where were you guys hiding!], the other Hauria tribesmen suddenly appeared around Cam! And they all took an "At ease" stance while lined up without moving at all as they awaited their command.

Cam had a satisfied smile as he looked at his tribesmen who stood in a line, his eyes were sharp like a blade and filled with drive which was enough to make people back away unconsciously, all of the residents------to be exact it was the Usagininzoku who he raised his voice towards.

[My brethren. People of the Sea of Trees who have suffered humiliation and resignation over the long time. Listen. Though we've managed to overcome the Empire this time, eternal peace is impossible. All of your futures will definitely be threatened once again, not too long from now]

The hundreds of Usagininzoku that were at the plaza trembled in fear towards those words. Will the painful days of the Empire come once again? they're eyes clinged onto Cam who was making a speech.

[Once that happens, you guys will once again experience days like yesterday. No, not only that. This time, even comrades who have escaped being slaves will also suffer the same fate]

Although they were safe now, the dark future was pointed out, not

only the Usagininzoku but also the other Demi-humans were looking down.

[Are you guys fine with that?]

There's no way it's fine. We never want to return to those days where our dignity was trampled on. Let alone, allowing our precious people to experience those pains as well.

But, even if you say that, what should we do……

Cam was glancing sternly at his brethren who were looking down, and as if the answer was right before their eyes, he further increased his voice.

[There's no way that's fine right? Then, what should we do. It's simple. If you want to protect those who are important to you right now…..fight. If you don't wish to live while being exploited in resignation then…..stand up for yourselves. If you wish to change the Usagininzoku's circumstances then……fill your heart with hatred! Just like how we of the Hauria Tribe did! The Usagininzoku was never the weakest to begin with! As long as you have determination, then you can become stronger than any other race! We've already proven that!]

Some leaked an, [Ah…..]. They realised that those who broke through the huge enemy and rescued them were not a special existence but the same Usagininzoku that they were. One of the Usagininzoku that was looking down rose their face up once again.

[Remember the humiliation that you received at the Empire. Do not contempt yourselves that it was due to unfortunate circumstances. Continue protecting your important people with your own hands. If you have the time to indulge yourself in resignation then take up your weapons! We'll teach you how to fight. If you seek power, if you've decided to fight then, you should come and join us. The Hauria tribe will always welcome you guys at any time!!]

After Cam finished ending his speech, he gave out a hand signal once again. Then, the Hauria tribesmen as if they were ninjas spread out and disappeared in an instant!

Once they saw that, Cam confirmed that the fires were lit up within the Usagininzoku's eyes and he chuckled to himself. [It looks like our military power's increased once again! I'll make sure to not miss the chance to remodel their minds immediately once they first participate in the training!] he thought.

[Boss, I'm sorry to have side tracked. It was just too good a time to secure talented people]

[Ahh, I don't particularly mind. ……So even you've become able to speak like that~. With that, how about uniting all the Usagininzoku with the Hauria?]

[Hahaha, if it comes to that then we'll become quite fearsome!]

[……Recently, father's demeanor has become more and more like Hajime-san's. I feel that the "Gentle Usagininzoku" will become exterminated not too long from now]

Shia was looking far into the distance with a dry smile. It appears that it's only a matter of time before all Usagininzoku's become brainwashed.

By the way, Gaharudo was also there. Right before his eyes, the Hauria tribe which defeated him were gathering forces but he didn't say anything in particular. Or rather, he was in a situation where he couldn't say anything. In order to not needlessly give more information than necessary on Fair Bergen away, Hajime made him wear magic sealing shackles which were attached to his feet and arms and a mask which completely shut out light and sound (Yellow soil colored).

After this and after explaining the oath as proof of the Empire's defeat to the elders, they planned to immediately return him through the gate. That was the only reason they brought along the Emperor----there wasn't anything like dignity.

[Fumu, we can't let them stay out here any longer. Guide them inside. Arutena, I'm relying on you]

[Yes, oji-sama. Sa～a, it's this way. Nagumo-sama]

Because of Cam's speech, they attracted too much attention for a simple greeting, so Alfrerick urged Arutena to guide them into the hall that was prepared.

Arutena who received the task, nodded once, and then for some reason she tried to take hold of Hajime's hand while smiling radiantly to guided them. That action wasn't missed in Yue and their eyes. By chance, his right hand had already been held onto by Yue so she aimed towards the left side where Shia was, however

Shia similarly smiled radiantly as she casually took back Hajime's left hand.

Shia and Arutena's line of sight intersected. For some reason you could hear an auditory hallucination of electricity being discharged ～Bachi Bachi～.

[We're counting on you (. . . .) to guide us. Arutena-san?]

[Yes, of course, Shia-san. But, since there are lots of people, for the sake of not losing you guys, I'd like to hold onto his hand?]

So she says, Arutena tries to get back Hajime's left hand which Shia took. It appears that she was properly listening to Cams provocation. It was an unbecoming attitude for the princess of the forest people*for some reason the author isn't referring to them as elves anymore, unless forest people in japanese is supposed to stand for elf?*. Rather than facing Hajime so on and so forth*This line's iffy, ハジメに対して云々というより*, Shia's sense of rivalry seemed to have been pretty strong.

[Just according to plan!], is what Cam seems to say as he was grinning from ear to ear, having guessed the circumstances of the surroundings Hajime smiled while releasing blood lust. In an instant, Cam broke out in cold sweat like a waterfall.

Hajime who was slightly stressed let out a sigh towards Cam and tightly gripped onto Shia's hand.

[Ah…..]

Shia unintentionally let out a voice. Then at the next moment she smiled brightly and she tightly embraced Hajime's arm. Although it was his artificial arm, due to its artificial nerves he was able to feel the wonderful feeling of having his left arm buried into her breasts.

While looking at such a happy Shia, Arutena unintentionally looked towards Hajime, Hajime's eyes were coldly stating, [Quickly guide us in], then her shoulders quickly dropped and she began to downheartedly guide them. From the start, it was imbalanced due to Shia who traveled with him and had lots of contact rather than with Arutena, the results were obvious.

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Once they were guided into the hall, the elders sat towards the end, and the Hauria tribesmen including Cam was also at the meeting, and on the right was Gaharudo who sat across from Hajime.

He's already publicly declared the defeat of the Hoelscher Empire and Gaharudo has said the contents of the oath, to which the elders and others can testify to. With this, all elders seemed to admit that the Hauria tribe was telling the truth.

[Fu~n. However, how dare you nonchalantly come here alone. You're our sworn enemy. Surely you don't think you can return safely?]
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One of the elders-----Zell of the Toraninzoku*Tiger*, stared at Gaharudo with hate who entered into enemy territory alone haughtily. The atmosphere was like anything could go flying at any moment.

However, even if such a gare was turned to Gaharudo, he was indifferent.

[Ha～a? Isn't it obvious that that's what I thought. I honestly doubt you'd actually try to kill me. If that were to happen then it would only mean that Fair Bergen's leaders are full of idiots]

[What was that you bastard!]

Alfrerick was holding back Zell who was furious.

[Zell, stop it. I understand your feelings. The reason Gaharudo came here was for the sake of pledging to the oath which the Hauria tribe placed on him. Nothing more, nothing less. If he was killed now, then all meaning would be lost in the Hauria's actions which they risked their lives for]

[Ku～.....]

Zell made a mortifying face and threw his fist against the floor.

Gaharudo was laughing through his nose when he saw Zell. The atmosphere in that place was the worst. It was clear that Gaharudo had no sense of guilt for having enslaved the Demi-humans and also had no intent of apologising. However, Gaharudo enslaved the

Demi-humans because they were weak, the story of the Hauria tribe being able to free the Demi-humans was simply because they were strong. The elders gazed at Gaharudo with murderous intent and the situation further increased as Gaharudo simply laughed provocatively.

The one who easily broke apart that situation without questions asked was Hajime. Quit being so irritating already.

[Oi, Gaharudo. That's enough from you. Hurry up and leave]

[Ah?]

As Hajime got up and ignored Gaharudo's voice of confusion, he activated the gate while firmly holding onto the root of Gaharudo's neck.

[O, oi! You can't be seriously sending me back at this moment! Wait a little, I've finally come to Fair Bergen, there's a lot of things I want to find out about. Also you guys too, tch let go! Kora, you! I'm the Emperor! Don't go dragging me!]

Although Gaharudo was struggling violently, he wasn't able to overcome the inhumane strength holding him and he was mercilessly thrown into the other side of the gate.

Certainly, the reason why they brought along the Emperor was only because he had to admit to the oath that the Hauria created and everything else he says afterwards was unnecessary but…..[I'll remember this! Nagumo Hajime~e!!] as the Emperor shouted out

it created a doppler effect as he disappeared onto the other side of the gate, that scene certainly provoked some sympathy.

Ririana who was by the side had an strangely glad face though, [Even though you're an Emperor~, even though you're an Emperor~, the way you're treated~] she muttered out rhythmically. It appears that she was happy to have made a new comrade in having been treated in the same crude way that she was treated with.

Recently, Ririana had started becoming a regrettable princess, Shizuku who was by her side looked at her regrettably.

On the hand, the elders, especially Zell, were glaring at Hajime. [Why, did you dismiss the Emperor!] is what their eyes were expressing. The truth was quite ridiculous, to be honest, Hajime had no reason to be here either so if Gaharudo was returned then he could quickly leave.

[Please wait, Nagumo-dono. We still haven't decided on an appropriate repayment. Would you please stay around for a bit longer]

[No, I don't need anything, so. Those glances are irritating so we're leaving]

[Don't say that. If nothing is done with this much debt of gratitude, it'll be extremely shameful for us Demi-humans. At the very least, allow us to give you a place to sleep and eat for tonight. That's why, please stay around a while longer]

[....Haa~, I get it]

Although Hajime thought it was troublesome, he nodded to Alfrerick and sat down where he was before. after confirming that, Alfrerick turned around towards Cam.

[Well then, with this, the distinguishing achievements that the Hauria tribe has done has certainly been confirmed. Even though you were banished, you've helped us repel the invasions, moreover, going even as far as getting back all of our brethren from the Empire through an oath. We must repay you at all costs. For the time being, there is no one in opposition towards revoking your banishment. This was already decided after the last elder meeting after the invasion. From now on, you may visit Fair Bergen whenever you wish]

Revoking their banishment. That decision was already overturned at the last elder conference, having admitted to it just showed how big the achievements that the Hauria tribe contributed to were.

However, Cam only muttered, [Is that so], while not particularly glad at all. His attitude was that anything was fine.

[And also. For your distinguished achievements on this occasion, Cam, as chief of the Hauria tribe, I'd like to propose that as a reward, he may become a new elder. How do you other elders feel about it?]

All of the aides had wide opened eyes in surprise towards Alfrerick's words. Over the last several hundred years, there has never been an event where a different race was presented the seat of elder. It had always been the 6 kinds of Demi-humans, the Forest people, Tiger people, Bear people, Winged people, Fox people, and the natural natives. If you add in the Usagininzoku into that

formula, then from the Demi-human's perspective, it could only be referred to as a historical feat of honor for their race.

The other elders looked at one another and nodded after hearing Alfrerick's words, it was a unanimous agreement.

[Fumu, that's how it is. Cam. Will you accept the seat as an elder?]

[Of course, I refuse]

[[[[[.....Eh?]]]]]

Somehow or another, an atmosphere like, [Lets welcome our new companion!] appeared but, Cam easily cut apart that atmosphere. All of the elder's eyes became dots. It seems that they never thought they'd be rejected.

[.....Can I hear why?]

Somehow Alfrerick managed to recover, he was bearing a headache, wondering what was bad about something that Demi-humans thought to have been the greatest reward.

[There's no particular reason, to begin with you guys are fundamentally mistaken about something]

[A misunderstanding?]

[That's right. The reason why all Demi-humans were rescued was only due to the occasion. What made us decide to take action was because we thought about the future which would be the end of

the Usagininzoku. The other Demi-humans, if I were to say it, “doesn’t matter”]

[……What was that]

The elders looked at Cam unbelievably who was talking indifferently.

[Therefore, don’t get the wrong idea. We the Hauria tribe were never your ally. If, you guys who have tasted victory on this occasion decide to go off and wage war on the humans and start stocking up on weapons which cause trouble for us and boss then……you’d best believe that the Hauria tribe’s blade will be pointed at you]

[Are, are we not your brethren! Do you plan on pointing your blades towards your own fellow Demi-humans! Isn’t that insane!]

[Fu～n, it won’t change that you guys look down on the Usagininzoku. There’s no point in trying to get all intimate. Ma～a, that kind of thing doesn’t really matter. Anyways, all of our blades are held simply for the Usagininzoku’s future. As long as you guys carve that onto your chests, then its fine]

Cam’s expression after he finished speaking was refreshed. The Hauria who were also behind him were also smiling. Becoming a new elder, if you think we’d use our power for you guys then you’re sadly mistaken!- their eyes stated.

truthfully, it would be a lie to say that they haven’t calculated that far yet, Alfrerick and their expressions were bitter.

On one side, the people who were waiting around Hajime just watched everything unfold, then they all equally turned their eyes towards Hajime. [I don't care about anyone other than those important to me! I'm not interested! Pe～!] is what Cam's behavior was like, it was exactly like a certain somebody.

[It's as if you're saying that the Usagininzoku are independent from all the other Demi-humans]

[Alfrerick, you're always precise. It's exactly that. From now onwards, the Usagininzoku will be living by the rules of the Usagininzoku. Being incorporated into Fair Bergen's rules like a goody goody is something I want nothing to do with]

Aides and elders, the short-tempered Zell in particular, were extremely angry at Cam who was haughty. Although Cam had a cool face, the Hauria subordinates behind him were, [Ahh? got a problem with that!*Improvised, not really sure what they're doing here, やんのかゴラァ*] just like thugs who wanted to mince things up.

Within that, Alfrerick was thinking about something with a difficult expression, almost like ever since Hajime has showed up he's only been releasing tired expressions, then he talked to Cam.

[Then, Cam. How about if we recognise you guys as, "A race equal to Fair Bergen". Of course, that also gives you a special guest pass into the elders meetings. If we do this then you'd have no obligations to go along with what the elder meetings decide nor the laws of Fair Bergen, with that in mind, you'd have enough influence as us]

[Hoho～u. Ma～a, that's not a bad proposal]

Towards Alfrerick's new proposal, Cam smiled from ear to ear as if stating, [I wanted to hear those words!].

Cam had thought that in preparation for the day when the Empire eventually invades, he wanted some kind of connection with Fair Bergen. However, if he had allowed themsleves to be incorporated into Fair Bergen then he wouldn't be able to ignore the elder meetings and he'd be restricted from moving around freely. That's why it was best if they were an alliance only in name or as an external organization.

But, it was obvious that voices of opposition would appear when the Hauria tribe were getting too much preferential treatment. Against that, Alfrerick answered out while sighing.

[They are people who accomplished things as just a single race? Even if Fair Bergen collaborated with all its power, we'd likely not be able to do it. If you think like that, then its more than enough reason to consider them as equals? Besides, there's also the possibility that this'll cause the Hauria tribe to cut off all ties with us, do you guys not understand the gravity of loss that'll be for us? If we form an alliance, they who have been banished will once again create a connection. If so then, things of this degree when compared to the size of their accomplishments isn't excessive at all]

Although the elders were twisting their heads while grunting out, gunununu, eventually no good proposals came out so the prestige of a single race was somehow pushed through the elders meeting and they decided to go along with what Alfrerick proposed.

[That's how it is, Cam. As a decision of the elder's meeting, the status of, "The Alliance Race", will be given to he Hauria tribe, would that be fine with you?]

[Ma~a, whether we're recognized or not, what we have to do doesn't change, but those kinds of things would be alright. Ahh, incidentally, we're using the big tree towards the south so you guys shouldn't wander in without permission? We can't guarantee your lives after all]

They never expected that Cam would place an additional order.

Or rather, he selfishly declared it was his land without permission. As expected, even Alfrerick's cheeks twitched a bit. Shia who was besides Hajime had covered her face with both her hands. It seems she was embarrassed at her fathers impudence. Her blood father was letting out a Hyaha~ though.

Afterwards, the strangely tired looking elders left and Hajime and them went towards the big tree and were guided into their rooms at Fair Bergen.

The town was still stirring up a big uproar over the Demi-humans returning. Kouki and them were wondering if there was anything they could help with and took off but, Hajime and them decided to relax in the room indifferently.

By the way, Ririana had returned to the Kingdom a short while ago. It was still necessary to negotiate with the Empire and report of the current incident as well, they needed to decide the Kingdom's next moves.

Why, didn't she return at once, it was a simple story……from just a few minutes ago. Until Ririana said that she wanted to return to the Kingdom, Hajime had completely forgotten about her existence. When she passed through the gate, it's needless to say but something was shining within Ririana's eyes. *I.E. she was crying*

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Midnight

Even now, clamor can be heard throughout the whole town. They may have been holding some kind of celebration and feast somewhere.

Within that, Hajime and them who were relaxing as they desired inside of their room. But, there was one person who was strangely restless.

It was Shia. Since a while ago, she's been frequently glancing at Hajime and thinking about something.

To begin with, the person in question was receiving a lap pillow from Yue and was partly dozing off into the world of dreams, so he wasn't aware of Shia's state. As expected, his bones gave out after having to carry thousands of people. Yue was gently stroking Hajime who became dull as he relaxed his body, [Fumu], she looked at Shia sideways as she tilt her head.
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Right afterwards, she looked at Teio and Kaori who were besides Hajime and were looking at her enviously. And once again, [Fumu], she nodded, she slowly called out to Kaori and Teio.

[.....Kaori, Teio. You want to perform the lap pillow?]

[Eh? You'll switch with us?]

[Mu? Of course I want to]

Teio and Kaori gave her eyes filled with expectations and Yue incidentally laughed.

[.....I'm just asking]

[[.....]]

Yue had a smile on her lips as if something foolish happened. When they saw that, a blue vein appeared on Kaori and Teio's forehead. Furthermore, Yue also said, [How is it, you're jealous right?], as she tightly held onto Hajime's head.

[.....Yue, are you asking for a fight? Are you?]

[Fufufu, mistress, that annoyed me quite a bit]

[.....Are we doing this?]

Towards Yue's provocative smile, the two people, [If it's the

continuation from the daytime then I'll take you up on it!], they said while getting up. By the way, the winners of the matching during the daytime was the Yue and Shia pair.

[.....If you catch me who's running, I'll allow you to be next to Hajime for this night]

[[!]]

As expected, they couldn't hold a mock battle within the town so Yue proposed a game of tag. And the reward for victory was unprecedented. Kaori and Teio's tension became high even though it was midnight.

When Yue confirmed the reaction of the two people, she gently placed Hajime's head onto a pillow and stroke him once lovingly. And as if not affected by gravity, she gently jumped towards the window and just like she was dancing, she opened the window as she turned around.

On that occasion, [What?] she glanced towards shia and blinked her eye for a moment. Shia seemed to realise Yue's intention and with a small smile she nodded in gratitude.

[.....Game Start *english*]

As Yue let out those words she slipped out from of the window and in the next moment, she merged with the darkness and disappeared.

[Ku, I'll definitely catch her! For the sake of sharing a bed!]

[Fufu, I won't lose]

With a yell full of spirit. Kaori with her silver wings and Teio who grew dragon wings, jumped out from the window.

Shia who was the onlooker didn't follow them though because she understood that Yue had purposely provoked Kaori and Teio, so she intended to take advantage of the chance that she was thankful for obtaining. Excitedly, she went by Hajime's side and gently woke him up.

[Hajime-san, Hajime-san…...please wake up]

[N? What's wrong, Shia. Or rather, just a while ago Yue and them left but…..you didn't go with them?]

Even while he was still half asleep, Hajime had felt from the flow of magical power that Yue and them had left through the window, why are you still here? he tilted his neck.

[Eh~tto, it seems that I missed it somehow or another, that kind of feeling]

[.....Somehow or another, huh]

[Uu~. Rather than that! Everyone else has left, should we also go out for a stroll? I don't know anything about Fair Bergen's interior]

Because of Shia's hair color, she wasn't allowed out in public, so the first time she's been to Fair Bergen was with Hajime and them. At that time as well, since they suddenly left immediately she didn't have time to explore the whole town.

[.....Ma~a, I guess that's fine]

[Yes! It's a midnight date! …….It sounds a little obscene]

[I don't know about that*A who cares, feeling*]

Somehow or another, he felt that Shia wanted to talk, truthfully he wanted to continue sleeping but, Hajime decided that he had no other choice but to follow along. Shia joyfully clung onto Hajime's arm tightly. Then the two with their arms entwined walked out into the midnight of Fair Bergen.

After about 10 minutes, as the two people who were on a stroll were having an innocent talk, they came to notice that they've walked far enough to not hear the town's clamor anymore. And they also noticed that something at the top of the trees were shining out in pale blue light.

[Ah~, those are Montofaruta, Hajime-san]

[Montofaruta?]

[Yes, its a butterfly which emits a pale blue light just like the moonlight. They crowd onto tall trees because of the wind, in the night they look just like cheerful stars in the sky. Except, it's not known when they'll actually emit their light so this is quite a rare sight. You either see it only once a year or see nothing at all]

[He~e, they're certainly beautiful things]

The two who were looking upwards, decided that since it was such a rare sight they should get a closer look so they quickly climbed up higher on a tree, they found a thick branch and sat down beside each other. For a while, they enjoyed the light that the Montofaruta emitted just like a planetarium.

How many of them were there? slowly Shia began to open her mouth.

[Ano, Hajime-san]

[N?]

[Thank you very much. For a lot of things that I can't put in words….really, thank you very much]

[……Ahh. If you want to fully show your gratitude. Then I'm expecting things from you when we take on the great labyrinth]

[Fufu. Isn't this when you usually say "Don't mind it"?]

Shia laughed giggly towards the Hajime-like answer. However it quickly changed into a difficult expression and she turned her gaze onto Hajime.

[What should I do to repay Hajime-san?]

[If it's repaying then didn't I just receive it?]

[That was just words wasn't it. I want to repay your kindness in some kind of form. Can you think of what I can do which'll make you happy? ……If Hajime-san desires it then, I'll do anything. Really, anything]

Shia's Usamimi's moved around ~Piko Piko~ and she edged her but into contact with Hajime. Her eyes that were looking at Hajime were already moistening and contained heat, and her sighs contained enough heat that it seems like it'll burn on contact. The implied meaning, Hajime had certainly understood what Shia was saying but, he was daringly pretending to have not noticed.

[.....It'll be fine as long as you're still the same happy-go-lucky woman and laughing. You're our mood-maker after all?]

[Mo~u, what's with that, happy-go-lucky you say! Even though you hugged me in front of the Emperor and said I was important! This is the scene where say, [Then I'll have you repay with your body then, guhhehhehhe!], and attack me isn't it. Please read the atmosphere]

[It seems that we need to have a thorough talk about the image that you see me in]

[You're a single-minded good for nothing]

[Being single-minded there is usually a good thing though]

Shia puffed out her cheeks to show that she was dissatisfied. However, she quickly hung her head down disappointedly. Her Usamimi's also hung down as if they suddenly lost their power.

[.....I'm serious, I want to do something to thank you. Ever since I've met Hajime-san and everyone else, I've l always gave it my all*I think, 私はずっと貰いっぱなしです*. Although Hajime-san and Yue-san says that its fine if I just laugh but, just being with you 2 will naturally make me feel happy, it's definitely nothing like showing gratitude]

[But still, you're our companion right? I don't think you have to continuously think about such things]

[It's courtesy in intimate relationships. I want to properly thank Hajime-san and Yue-san as well. …..I've thought about it variously but, I just can't seem to think of anything. Hajime-san says that he doesn't need my body after all…..even though he tightly embraced me and said I was important, to tell me that I'm not needed…..]

[Don't sulk now…..]

Hajime was showing a troubled expression now that Shia was being timid. Even though he was being told that she wanted to express her gratitude, helping someone related to you was the natural course of action, really, just one word, [Thanks] would have been enough.

But, for Shia, those feelings didn't seem to sit well with her.

[If Hajime-san has fallen for me then I wouldn't be going through all these hardships. I'd fully service (thank) you…..ha~a, there's no helping it then. I'll try harder to be much more useful than before as we travel in order to relay my thanks]

[I see]

When Shia shrugged her shoulders, once again, she looked up towards the Montofaruta up above.

While looking at her stature, Hajime was suddenly beginning to remember when he embraced Yue and Shia in front of Gaharudo.

Being truthful, that was pretty much done unconsciously. Once he came to, he had already embraced both of them.

As of now, the huge feelings of declaring someone as “Special” could only be said to Yue. That’s something that can be firmly declared. However, even if it was unconsciously, the reason why he held Shia within his arms was…….

Thinking up to that point, Hajime had a smile filled with self-mockery.

How could this be, ma~a, it was because he was selfish. While saying that no one was able to be on par with Yue, to have the desires to possess Shia, it was truly selfish. Once he realised it, Shia’s existence somehow became much larger than before. At the very least, as much as Yue where he unconsciously embraced her so that he wouldn’t lose her.

Although he’ll likely still hold more feelings for Yue than any other person, even still, he doesn’t seem to be able to deceive himself about his desire for Shia anymore. Once he became aware of it, he wasn’t able to pretend that it wasn’t there. If so then, do your best so work hard, how about taking on the attitude of the girl who came with them? Hajime suddenly thought.

[Eh, Ehtto, what is it? It’s extremely embarrassing to be quietly stared at….]

Once he came to, Shia's cheeks were dyed red blushing shyly and squirming nervously. Her Usamimi as well as if saying, [U~u, why are you looking~], it suddenly dropped down, occasionally, she'd squirm around and look towards Hajime.

Hajime's eyes soften up when he sees Shia like this and he reached out with his hand. And her shy Usamimis were gently stroked.

[Ha, Hajime-san?]

[……Na~a, Shia. I've got a favor I want to ask…..]

[A favor? Of course, it's fine! Feel free to ask for anything]

For a moment, she was surprised by Hajime's words, since she could show her gratitude even a little bit, Shia consented willingly while smiling.

[No, lets see, I kinda want to lie down for a bit. If you're up for it, can I ask for a lap pillow?]

[Fu~e, even if you didn't ask, please use it anytime. Sa~a, please step right up]

[Thanks]

Although Shia showed a slightly disappointed expression from Hajime's request, she was happy that she was giving him a lap pillow and she patted her thighs with a bright smile. Hajime expressed his thanks with a smile and laid down without hesitation.

Because Shia wore a miniskirt, he was able to fully feel the feelings of her thighs. A soft and warm puffy feeling supported Hajime's head. It faintly resembled Yue's, as a sweet scent tickled his nose.

[Fufu, it's unfortunate for Kaori-san and Teio-san. Around this time, they're fighting against Yue-san in order to give Hajime-san a lap pillow, but I've already taken it ahead of them]

[Ma～a, Yue'll win anyways so there's no reason to worry about it?]

[You shouldn't say such things. Since they're want to make Hajime-san fall for them they're working hard. Really, I wonder when will Hajime-san finally fall for me～]

[.....Will you give up?]

[No way～]

[I see～]

Shia was gently stroking Hajime's hair. Hajime narrowed his eyes as he became comfortable. And as payback, he played with Shia's hair that hung down before him. The pale blue white hair was really mysterious when it was combined with the light being emitted by the Montofaruta that were above them.

If someone had seen Shia and Hajime right now, they would have surely had an face which vomited due to the sugar. That was how sweet those two's atmosphere was. Right, it was exactly like the separate world that Hajime and Yue created.

However, unfortunately, although it was the atmosphere which was created with Yue that Shia longed for, she didn't notice at all. On that part, perhaps Shia could truly be called a regrettable rabbit.

Even with the actual person not realising, the sweet time continued to flow gently. Within the moonlight where the Montofaruta illuminated, Hajime and Shia were enjoying their time alone with each other.

lol Author notes that it's getting near the end so there should at least be some kind of progression with another girl other than Yue

Imitation

This is not meant to be a perfect translation, I cannot read japanese characters and this was carefully edited based on translations I got from my Machine Translator. Therefore, there are bound to be errors here and there! At best, this could be considered as an unedited Final Draft towards an Official Translation

In the dense fog that clung onto bodies, people's shadow could be seen moving on without hesitation.

It was Hajime and them.

With Shia in the front, Hajime and them are currently heading towards the big tree. It's the second day after they've arrived at Fair Bergen, the cycle for the path to the big tree to open has finally come.

Within that time, there were various disturbances which Hajime and them were caught up in as they stayed in Fair Bergen but, if you compare it with what usually happens, it's likely not to such a high extent that it couldn't be categorized as their daily lives.

Mainly, the thing with Kouki and the freed slaves (girls), a group of male Demi-human's were doing this and that to hajime because of the thing with Arutena, and Ryutaro was doing this and that with the Demi-humans martial arts masters……those kind of stories.

Along the way, forest demons launched a surprise attack under the fog. However, Hajime and the rest, Yue, Shia, Teio, and the Hauria didn't deal with it at all, they left everything up to Kouki and them.

Since they didn't know what kind of trials the great labyrinth [Harutsuina Sea of Trees] holds, as a warm up they were told to take out the demons.

To begin with, because the Sea of Trees drives the senses of other races besides the Demi-humans mad, it was completely different than fighting against the demons at [Orcus Great Labyrinth], Kouki and them were having a pretty hard fight. They kept teasing by using hit and run tactics repeatedly and Ryutaro was plainly irritated at the demons who made full use of the dense fog.

[……There! Like this….this!]

Within there, Kaori was mixed into Kouki and them's repeated combat.

Kaori still wasn't completely in full control of Nointo's body yet so she was there voluntarily to train. It appears that, the dense fog didn't effect Nointo's body as much, it seems to be just the right adjustment for the battle experience and trace skills that Nointo had.

Even now, while fluttering her wings which shined in silver, it shot out silver feathers to repel the demons. It appears that she's gotten used to using the silver feathers, as if they were homing missiles, they launched out at the demons and instantly decomposed them to nothingness.

[Ya!]

In addition, while giving out a shout, the approaching demons who slipped past the silver feathers were wonderfully cut into 2 by the great sword that was clad in silver light that was pulled out in an instant.

It seems that she still couldn't wield them freely like how Nointo did but, if its just one hit then she's considerably skilled. At the very least, it was at the level where she couldn't be embarrassed to call herself a "Swordsman".

[I seem to be considerably getting used to this. It's worthwhile that I get into a fight with Yue everyday] *<-This part may be wrong, it sounds different from what the machine's actually giving me, ユエと喧嘩しているだけの事はある*

[.....Your spec's are abnormal. I can't afford to be careless]

Hajime let out a breath and muttered, [Fuu～], as he watched Kaori's figure.

Although she's still not on the original Nointo's level yet which was able to give the Hajime at full power a hard fight, but if you think about her growth rate, it was wonderful since it was still only around 10 days since her soul was transferred. Kaori's diligence is likely allowing her to rapidly master Nointo's fighting power.

[That's not true. I'm still not accustomed to using magic while fighting, if I don't concentrate on Decomposition it wont activate as well…..I still can't even get a hit off of Yue]

It appears that she heard the conversation between Hajime and Yue, Kaori was pouting as she moved forwards. She wants to quickly become stronger, she has the image but, she's frustrated that it doesn't go as she thought it would…..those kind of feelings are reflected on her expression.

[…….Kaori. What are you saying. Your physical abilities exceeds ours, you have the brutal ability of decomposition in your silver wings, and you've got aptitude in all attributes and can use magic without having to chant and without magic formations. Your swordsmanship is also progressing limitlessly like a joke as well, due to your proficiency in recovery magic, your defenses are like a fortress, even if they successfully inflict a wound onto you, it'll heal up immediately….it's already unsuitable to call you a cheat anymore, you're more like a bugged character. Yet you're still dissatisfied?]

Shizuku pointed out her specs as if she was amazed, Kaori had felt that she definitely felt like a monster so she just let her eyes wander around.

[But, I can't defeat Yue or Shia…..if I'm a bugged character then, what are Hajime-kun and them?]

[…..Something hard to describe or something…like that…..]

Shizuku was showing a difficult expression as she thought of the best way to describe Hajime and them, it seems that nothing came to mind in the end. Kouki called out to Shizuku.

[It’s fine, Shizuku. As long as we can clear the great labyrinth then even we can become as strong as Nagumo. No, if you think about Nagumo’s non-fighting class, surely we’d be able to be stronger than him]

[Looks like it. I’m looking forwards to find out what kind of magic we’ll obtain]

[Un, lets do our best!]

Although Hajime’s strength doesn’t come solely from Age of Gods magic, Kouki who was through with it was strongly clenching his fist. Ryutaro and Suzu also seemed to have been pumped up.

[Every～one, We’ve reached it～]

When Kouki and them were firing themselves up, Shia tells them of their arrival at the big tree as she looked back over her shoulder. When Hajime and them chased after Shia who advanced ahead and disappeared into the other side of the fog, they arrived at a space that had no fog. Towering in front was a withered huge tree just exactly like they saw before.

[This is…..the big tree…..]

[It’s large…..]

[It’s extremely……huge]

While looking above their heads, they weren’t even able to see the

top of the big tree, Kouki and them had their mouths opened absentmindedly as its width was so long it was as if they were standing in front of a wall. Surely it was the same expression anyone else would have had when seeing it for the first time, Hajime and Yue had a small smile while looking at eachother.

Hajime approached the lithograph while pulling out all the proofs that he's obtained from the other great labyrinths out of his "Treasure Warehouse". The lithograph hasn't changed since last time, crests of the 7 great labyrinths are drawn on the front and it's back was hollow in order to allow the proofs to be place in.

While crouching down, Hajime was playing with the 5 proofs in his palm, Kouki and them were finally freed from the large tree's dignified appearance and focused on Hajime. From now on it'll be a place where anything can truly happen at anytime. While bracing themselves, Hajime looked sharply at Kouki and them.

[Cam, Since we don't know what'll happen from now on, back off with the Hauria tribe]

[Roger, boss. May fortune be with you]

By Fair Bergen's negotiations, the south land with the big tree became Cam and their territory but, from Hajime's words his expression became a bit disappointed, However he still decided to salute and then everyone spread out together.

When he confirmed that, Hajime slowly placed the [Orcus Great Labyrinth] ring of proof into the hollow section of the lithograph. Once it was placed, the lithograph began to shine faintly and characters appeared.

“4 proofs”

“Power of Reproduction”

“Guidepost of weaved bonds”

“A path for a new trial shall be open for those who have everything”

[This is the same as before as well. The used proof….is anything other than [Kamiyama] fine]

Hajime went ahead and set the proofs into the lithograph that while muttering. [Raisen’s Ring] [Guryuen’s Pendant] [Merujine’s Coin]……

Each time one was set into the lithograph, it’s light strengthened up. And immediately after placing the final coin, the light was set free and it scattered onto the front of the big tree, this time the big tree was the one that shined brightly.

[Mu? A crest has appeared on the big tree]

[…..Next is, the power of Reproduction?]

As Teio muttered with great interest, a pattern of the 7 angel systems stood out on the trunk of the large tree. Yue walked towards the shining pattern and while quietly touching it she used Reproduction magic.

Immediately afterwards,

Pa~aaaaa!!

The big tree was wrapped up in a light uncomparable to before, a wave of light was continuously rippling towards the top from the place that Yue had touched.

The big tree that was shining brightly, gradually revived as the light spread out to every corner as if it was absorbing water from its roots.

[Ah, leaves…..]

Shia pointed at the leaves which appeared as the tree regained it's vitality with each passing moment. It was almost like looking at the birth of life, Hajime and them were staring at what was in front of their eyes with a mysterious feeling, the big tree was quickly growing and it regained its bright green looks.

As a slightly strong wind blew by, the sound of the large tree's leaves rustling around could be heard. Then, at the next moment, all of the sudden, the front of the tree trunk was split from the right and left and a cave appeared. It was a big cave which could fit several tens of people.

Hajime and them looked at each others faces and nodded to each other and stepped into the cave without hesitation.

Hajime was slightly concerned------would the other members who have not captured 4 great labyrinths actually be able to challenge the great labyrinth of the Sea of Trees, but it appears that it was pointless worries. Everyone was able to enter the cave without a problem.

It was probably like the other great labyrinths in the stance of, [If you want to enter, it's fine as long as you have what's necessary. However, your life is not guaranteed].

Hajime looked around the surroundings. But, there didn't seem to be anything particular in the cave. It was simply a huge space which extended out like a dome.

[Is it a dead-end?]

Kouki muttered out doubtfully.

Immediately afterwards, the entrance to the cave began to shut as if it had been reverse-reproductioned.

The light from the outside gradually thinned out. Hajime scolded Kouki who instinctively panicked. When the entrance was completely shut, the inside of the cave was wrapped in darkness, immediately Yue secured a light source and held it up in her hand. However there was no need for it.

That's because a huge magic formation appeared underneath their legs and it emitted strong light.

[Uwa, what's this!]

[What's up! What is this!]

[Quit making so much noise! Its a transfer magic formation! Don't be careless when you're transferred!]

After Hajime warned the shaken Ryutaro and Suzu, their view blacked out.

~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~

[~.....This is……]

What reflected in Hajime and their view when the light returned was a lush forest. A sea of trees inside of a tree…..created an indescribably odd situation.

[Is everyone alright?]

Kouki lightly shook his head and confirmed his surroundings for the safety of his comrades. There Shizuku and them, [We're fine], replied. Yue, Shia, Teio, and Kaori didn't seem to have any particular problems either, they watched their surroundings with caution.
~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~

[Nagumo, this is really the great labyrinth right? ……Which way should we progress in?]

The place where Hajime and them were transferred to was, a vacant circled lot where they were completely surrounded by trees in 360 degrees, there wasn't a guidepost indicating which way they should go either.

Since it's covered in a dense fog, it doesn't seem like flying overhead to look for a path would be useful. That's why Kouki asked Hajime who had lots of experience with great labyrinths.

[……For the time being, we've got no choice but to look around]

Hajime muttered out with a slightly displeased expression, he placed his hand onto the trunk of a tree and activated "Tracing". A magic mark was created, a bright red arrow was placed onto the tree and pointing in the direction where they were going.

When Kouki and them saw that they nodded. It seems they understood that they had no choice but to search while placing signs. And they took the lead since they heard that even if you cleared the labyrinth, if they weren't recognized by the great labyrinth then they wouldn't be able to obtain Age of Gods magic.

The other members followed behind successively. However, only Hajime didn't move from his place as his eyes retained coldness within it. As they began to walk, Shia noticed and a "?" appeared

over her head as she turned back towards Hajime.

[……Hajime-san? Whats wro----]

Shia called out to Hajime……in that moment,

Shuba!

When they heard that wind-like noise ring out, in a instant Yue and Teio, as well as Ryutaro were coiled by a wire, with both spheres on both ends fixed into the air they were restrained. Hajime had taken out the bola from his “Treasure Warehouse” and quickly thrown them to bind them.

Yue, Teio, and Ryutaro wiggled around as they struggled. When Kouki and them saw that they were dumbfounded. However, once they regained their sanity and as if it was able to produce a ~Ki~ sound they immediately glared strongly at Hajime.

[Nagumo! What exactly are you doing!]

Kouki instinctively raised his voice angrily. Shizuku and them had tensed expressions as their eyes conveyed that they wanted an explanation from Hajime.

[……Be quiet for a bit]

However, Hajime only said that and didn't answer Kouki and their doubts and silently looked towards Yue, he briskly walked up towards her who was expressionless.

And, as Yue looked up at Hajime perplexedly, Hajime pressed Donner against her forehead. His eyes had a coldness of absolute zero within them, it was obvious that Hajime was completely furious in anger.

[Hajime….What i-]

Yue had a, I can't believe it, expression as Hajime pointed his muzzle at her. And when she tried to voice out her doubt as she called Hajime's name.

However, immediately after that,

Dopan!

Hajime pulled Donner's trigger without hesitation. A dry explosive noise echoed throughout the sea of trees. For now, although the muzzle was removed from Yue's forehead and pointed towards her shoulder, even still it didn't change the fact that Hajime had shot his beloved lover.

Towards that fact, it was obvious that Kouki and them as well as

Shia and them were intensely shaken. And they looked at Hajime with eyes that doubted his sanity.

[Wha, what are you doing! Nagumo-kun!]

[Hajime-kun! Stop!]

Shizuku and Kaori raised their voices to attempt to stop Hajime who was filled with rage but, Shia finally noticed the sense of incongruity and held onto Kaori and them by the hand instead.

Although there was an air like Kouki would spring at any moment to try and restrain Hajime but, that disappeared after Hajime's next words.

[Don't speak without permission, Imitations. You're only an imitation and you dare imitate Yue's voice. If you dare to call my name with that voice again. I'll scrape off your hands and feet]

The moment Hajime uttered his voice, as if the ground was arctic cold, the air was filled with coldness. However the temperature hasn't actually fallen. Murderous intent was overflowing from his body and in turn dropped the heat that life was giving out. Somehow, even the surroundings became dark. Towards the dense murderous intent, Kouki and them naturally became shallow breathed and cold sweat ran down like a waterfall.

[What are you? Where is the real Yue?]

[.....]

Yue's appearance was as if stating, "What is it", with her expression and was silently unmoved in her stance *<-I improvised and have a feeling the ending here is incorrect by a lot, ユエの姿をした"何か"は表情をストンと落とすと無機質な雰囲気を纏って無言を貫いた*. Rather than "Who are you" it was "What are you", this was because blood was not flowing from where she was shot in the shoulder. It was obvious that it wasn't a "person".

Dopan!

This time Hajime shot through the opposite shoulder. However the fake Yue still didn't change her expression. It appears that they didn't have a sense of pain. Just like Nointo, they carried an image as if they were puppets, or they may not actually have any will of their own.

[Are you not going to answer. ……No, do you not have a function to answer. Then its fine already. Die]

Dopan!

This time Hajime pointed Donner's muzzle onto Yue's forehead and used a rail gun to blast her head off. Behind Yue (Fake), something was splattering and scattering.

Although Shizuku and them instinctively turned away from it, if you took the time to look at it, it wasn't a brain but a rust colored slime that had scattered. Yue's (Fake) body which lost it's head was

beginning to melt after one beat, it similarly turned into a rust colored slime and stained into the ground.

Hajime continued to shoot through Teio and Ryutaro's heads consecutively while they were still restrained by the bola. As the two people splattered Kouki and them instinctively had goosebumps but, as expected they turned into a rust colored slime and were inhaled into the ground just like the Yue (Fake) slime.

[Chi. As expected of a great labyrinth. Starting right off the bat….]

Hajime cursed out as he holstered Donner.

[Hajime-san…..Yue-san and Teio-san are…..]

[They must have been transferred to a different location from earlier. There was a slight sense of the feeling when our memories were being searched by Age of Gods magic. The rust colored slimes who obtained the memories used their mimic abilities to disguise themselves, it felt like they had openings from behind?] *＜-Unsure about this part, 隙を見て背後からって感じじゃないか*

Hajime's expression distorts into a bad mood as his lover turned into soup. Shizuku and Suzu nodded as if they felt admiration as they heard Hajime's guess.

[I see. …..Even still you've done good to notice]

[Un un, Suzu wasn't able to tell the difference at all. How did you notice?]

Suzu asked for Hajime's identification tips as it would be troubling if they couldn't distinct their own comrades apart. Kouki looked at Hajime with interest as well while worrying about the safety of his best friend.

Hajime's answer towards that question was….

[Even if you asked me. …..I can only say that the instant I saw them, I noticed. What was before my eyes was "Not my Yue"]

[[[[[[……..]]]]]

In a sense, all members lost their strength when the answer was him speaking fondly of his sweetheart.

[Then, how about Ryutaro-kun and Teio-san?]

[Once you know that there are imposters then, with the "Magic Eye Stone" if you look carefully you can see a sense of incongruity. That's why you don't have to worry as long as you're with me from now on]

Is that so~, Kouki and them looked at Hajime amazedly. Within that, as if Shia thought of something she went, ~ha~, while fidgeting she asked Hajime while expecting something.

[Ano, Hajime-san…..if it was me, would you also notice it in an instant?]

[!]

Kaori who was next to Shia reacted, in her glance she asked, [How about me?]. Somehow or another eyes were attracted to Hajime. Inside of the delicate bittersweet atmosphere, Hajime answered plainly without much vigor.

[Sa~a? Isn't it impossible for just a moments glance?]

[[.....]]

Usually while one was reading the air, [Of course, Isn't it obvious that I'd realize it?], and answer like that but, this was part of Hajime's quality. While thinking that he mercilessly answered.

Unintentionally Shia and Kaori continued to stare at him but, Hajime continued to advance into the depths of the sea of trees while being indifferent about the two people's glances.

[It's questionable how he can have such strong nerves….]

[Au, Kaolin, Shiashia, cheer up!]

[Kaori is really, what about that guy is…..]

While following after Hajime, Shizuku and them glanced at Shia and Kaori who puffed their cheeks in a bad mood from their appeal. While having various problems at the the start of the line, they stepped into the sea of trees.

By the way, in his mind, [If it was Shia I'd know], is what Hajime had thought but…..he had just decided to take on an honest attitude but he carelessly said that bluntly so he may very well be a tsundere.

~~~~~~

Vuu~uu"uu"uu"uu"!!

Exactly like an electric fan moving at maximum speeds, that kind of sound was echoing in the sea of trees. It wasn't one or two either. It was the buzzing of countless numbers. Translucent wings that were flapping at super-high speeds were already like a kind of attack as the noise reverates.

[Uu~, gross~, "Beyond Heaven-ugh"!]

[Don't whine! Suzu, it went that way!]

[Ku, it's quick! "Heavenly Flying Sword"!] *<-What I'm calling it, 天翔剣*

Suzu looking like she wanted to cry as she was holding in the physiological disgust she felt from looking at the demon.

That may be something that can't be helped. After all, the reason for the buzzing was a toddler sized "Bee". If you compared it in form then it would be a hornet. The super-huge bee-typed demon were attacking in swarms with their tough jaws and lethal stingers.
~~~~~~

With a malicious yellow and black hue, their jaws creaked as it opened and closed, their stingers had green liquid dripping from it, their feet that waved around eerily, and their dark red compound eyes……it certainly was a creature that you'd want to avoid.

Moreover, this bee-typed demon were hard to deal with because they were quick and they cooperated in groups. Furthermore, they could continuously shoot out their needles since a new one would immediately grow in its place, from mid-range it was exactly like a machine-gun so there was the threat of being swept by a rain of stingers.

Somehow Suzu's barriers were keeping out the stingers, as opposed to Kouki's method of hammering them with a single blow, Shizuku was breaking apart their cooperation and speed, however the swarm of bee's were not decreasing in numbers at all.

[Damn, these guys, they're exactly like the Majinzoku's demons!]

[No, it's reversed isn't it? They're monsters are similar to the great labyrinth's monsters]

Kouki wielded his sacred sword with a desperate look, he remembered the scene of bloodshed that they experienced previously and unintentionally cursed out. They had absolutely no space to relax because the great labyrinth's monsters were so strong.

At the moment a mantis-shaped demon that was around 2 meters in length was about to do a surprise attack on Kouki from behind

but, Hajime killed it in an instant and tsukkomied at the same time.

A slight distance away from Hajime, Shia was killing 3 meter ant-typed demons in a single hit with Doryukken and blasting through the ground building a mountain of corpses. Kaori wasn't losing either, she continuously shot out silver feathers and close to 30 bee's were already shot down and decomposed.

When Kouki saw the spectacle that came into view, he grit his teeth as he feels the difference between Hajime and their powers once again.

["Beyond Heaven-ugh" "Beyond Heaven-ugh"! It's useless. We'll be overwhelmed!]

Suzu who was close to tears, created several shining shields, she kept repeatedly building new ones as soon as the previous ones were destroyed, Suzu's magical power was mercilessly shaved down.

"Beyond Heaven" is not that strong but its strength is that it can be produced in great numbers, Suzu was a "Barrier Master" so her barriers also carried enough strength to take on several attacks from normal demons before they were destroyed.

However, in front of the bee-typed demon's stingers that they shot out, those barriers were instantly broken as if they were paper waste, currently Suzu was being forced to deploy barriers at unprecedented speeds.

Little by little, little by little, the deployment of barriers were being delayed and the scene of flying stingers gradually fills the distance, it was as if she was being strangled by a line of silk and it damaged Suzu's mind.

[Run rampant, "Thunder Flower"! mince them, "Flash Claw"!]*<- What I'm calling it, 爪閃*

Along with Shizuku's chants, a sinister flower of thunder bloomed in the sky, and a claw of wind minced through. She demonstrated her black katana's abilities on the approaching bee-typed demons.

With her sharp swordsmanship, she was certainly feeling the feedback of the demons being torn apart. With Shizuku being a Speed Fighter, being paired up against the bees was a good match. While disturbing their cooperation with her free movement skill "No Rhythm", one by one she was sure to slaughter them.

However, the bee-typed demon's strength was their numbers. Even if she could defeat them, Shizuku was lacking in overwhelming annihilation powers. Hence, the war situation was that they were gradually being pushed, Shizuku who noticed that had a bitter expression.

[Will of the blade, harboring light which will tear apart the enemy! "Light Blade"!]

Thanks to Shizuku, Kouki was able to chant as he liked and his

sacred sword was coated by a sword of light.

The light blade extended his sacred sword by about another 2 meters in length. Kouki swung the huge blade of light while rotating his body in one motion which cut through all gathered surrounding bee-typed demons.

However because the motion of the attack held too many openings, the demons charged in towards him. In response his body was hurled backwards.

[Ku, why you!]

[Kouki!]

The bee-typed demon was about to thrust its stinger into him but, fortunately, Kouki's sacred armor prevented the stinger from coming near, Kouki somehow managed to use that chance to get up and cut off it's head.

He had no room to answer Shizuku's worried voice. In the next moment, he was attacked by huge quantities of demons so Kouki needed to finish recovering his balance.

[Uo～ooooo!]

Although Kouki waved his sacred sword while shouting, the demons in the great labyrinth weren't sweet enough to spare you

any time when you've exposed a chance. At last, a bee-typed demon managed to slip past the sacred sword and get behind him, it then clung onto him from behind like spikes on shoes, it was trying to use its jaws to tear through Kouki's neck.

[~!?]

Kouki raised a voiceless scream.

in that juncture,

Dopan!

A gunshot.

The moment when the bee's jaws were about to pierce through Kouki's neck, a flash of light surged out from the side as it cut through the sky and easily blew off the bee-typed demon's head off.

Kouki who was unsteady due to the aftereffect, ignored the heat that he felt on his neck and separated himself from the remains of the bee-typed demon that was clinging onto him. Although it was a narrow escape from death, Kouki's cheeks cramped as more demons swarmed him.

------I'll be overwhelmed!

He was convinced. A voice that had no sense of panic was heard in Kouki's ears.

[Don't move, Amanogawa]

Immediately afterwards, countless meteors fell down upon the bee-typed demons and mercilessly trampled them.

Doo~opan! Doo~opan! Doo~opan! Doo~opan! Doo~opan!

You could only hear one gunshot but, the truth was that there were 6 flashes produced. *<- lol wut? the author only had 5 Doo~opan's*

The shining red spear of light pierced through all demons in the line of fire and killed them instantly. In addition, the bullets were shot out with well-thought out trajectories, they went through the air and collided with the other bullets and with that slight change in angle they efficiently pierced through more Demons.

According to their viewpoint, it almost seemed as if the enemies voluntarily jumped into the bullets. Such special technique could be called an admirable performance, the demons which were giving Kouki a hard time were overwhelmed by Hajime, the bullets were continuously spinning and reloading one another, in addition Donner and Schlag shot out when they fell into confusion.

……It didn't even take 1 minute before everything was taken care

of. It was instant killings.

Hajime who annihilated the bee-typed demons in no time at all holstered Donner and Schlag as if nothing happened, he approached the defeated monsters as Kouki and them were stunned.

[Chi, it doesn't seem like there's any meaning even if I ate them…..]

[E, eat? Eh, Nagumo-kun, you intended to eat this? Seriously?]

Instinctively, Shizuku asked after being influenced by the previous act of devastation.

[Did I not say it before? …..If I eat a demon which is equal or higher than me, I can take in the opponents inherent magic for myself. In the abyss, the only thing there was to eat were demons. Ahh, you guys shouldn't copy me. Without a doubt you'd die]

[Even if you didn't say it, we wouldn't. Hearing it once again is truly sublime…..]

Shizuku was looking at Hajime with a complex expression. He's really reliable since he's helped them countless times by now but, she was reminded once again of where that power came from was through a sublime experience, she was lost on whether she should honestly feel admiration or not.

[Bu, but, why aren't you eating this thing then? No, as for Suzu,

suzu doesn't want to see such a predation scene so you don't have to eat it but……]

[I just said it just now? There's no meaning unless they're equal or higher than me. The guys around here are all small frys]

[……I See~. For Nagumo-kun, this monster is a small fry~. I see~, ahaha]

[Suzu, I understand your feelings so don't break. Please come back]

Suzu who was giving a dry laugh as if slightly broken and Shizuku was sighingly asking her to regain her sanity.

[……..]

Within that, only Kouki was staring at the remains of the demons that Hajime had created while tightly grasping the sword in his grip. For himself, the enemy was powerful to the extent where he had almost lost his life, but Hajime evaluated them as if they were just stones on the side of the road without any value, he felt unpleasant from their difference in ability. Although he was trying to pretend to not notice, dark emotions were beginning to swell up again within his heart.

Hajime glanced over at Kouki who was standing still silently.

[…….Amanogawa]

[~. Wh, what is it?]

[For now just think about finding your childhood friend. Being

worried about this and that, it'll be fine as long as you do what you have to do]

[Ah, ahh. You're right, we have to quickly find Ryutaro and them….]

Although he stuttered somewhat, Kouki nodded firmly towards Hajime's words. He braced himself again to search for his missing childhood friend.

After Hajime was glancing at Kouki like that, he seemed to have lost interest and averted his glance.

As a matter of fact, Hajime had clearly understood what Kouki was feeling. Inferiority complex and frustration, jealousy of strength……..they were emotions which Hajime had felt once before.

He never thought that Kouki who had everything would be feeling that way towards himself, it was a rather ironic subject. As Hajime was thinking about such things, because he had no feelings to consider for Kouki, he was simply through with it. The words from awhile ago that Hajime said out was already a big treat.

[Hajime-san, the other side was cleaned up~]

[Fu~u, this side is done too]

In the meantime, Kaori and Shia who finished dealing with the demons came back.

[Alright. Well then, shall we depart. I think that if its Yue and Teio then it's alright but, we should still regroup with them as quickly as possible. Sakagami is……ma~a, whatever happens, happens]

[Wha-, aren't you treating Ryutaro too crudely? Say, I know that your lover is important and all but….]

From what Hajime said, Shizuku had a troubled expression as she tsukkomied. The party advanced through the interior of the sea of trees to look for their companions who were separated from them.

Chapter 126 – Even if the Appearance Changes

ZUDOOOOON! DOOGOOOON! GOOBAAA!

A roar shakes the ground in the sea of trees over and over, creatures which inhabit it were desperate to escape from the center of the explosion while panicking.

[Oraa! I'll destroy this forest, get out of my way!]

Among the sounds that roared consistently, you could hear a scream.

It was Hajime's voice.

Incidentally, it is Hajime who bombs the sea of trees in the present while scattering the roaring sound. A vein on his forehead is showing while he uses "Orkan" (TL: His rocket launcher) in both hands and randomly shooting rockets and missiles.

[A, Ano, Hajime-san, anymore is …..]

[That's right, Hajime-kun, I'm sure that demon is already died, too and ….]

Without hiding his anger and frenzy, hundred of rockets and missiles were already shot by Hajime who keeps shooting cluster bombs with the “Cross Bits” from the sky in the forest, while Shia and Kaori fluster to restrain him.

However, ….

[Well, what?]

[Ie, it is nothing.]

[Un, I’m sorry to bother you.]

The two retracted their previous remarks immediately, because Hajime looked back with bloodshot eyes. (TL: He looked with blood lust.)

[Uu,…. scary. Shizushizu～ stop him.]

[Do not say the unreasonable, Suzu. I do not want to die yet. I think it’s also reasonable why he is angry…..]

Shizuku gives out a sigh while she’s calming Suzu who is clinging to her. She looks a little to the side. There was a crouching figure that was suppressing his own eyes with both hands while weeping.

[My eyes~, my eyes~, damn it, Nagumo! What are you doing so suddenly!]

A voice of agony is raised like a colonel from somewhere. It was the state of a person who got his eyes busted. Also, according to the words, Kouki's eyes were pierced by Hajime who used his fingers like scissors.

So why is Hajime so mad that he burned the forest and crushed Kouki's eyes?

After Hajime and the others fought a bee-shaped demon, they searched in the sea of trees for approximately 30 minutes. It was because of the encounter of a certain demon.

The demon was a monkey-type which attacked in crowds. The attacks flew from all angles freely by using the trees as a foothold and it was fairly troublesome. They were equipped with sword and clubs etc. Though it was unknown where they got these weapons.

Kouki, Shizuku and Suzu were fighting the monkey-demons and were played around with the tricky movements of them. Naturally, the monkey-demons were not Hajime's enemy, as one would expect.

Hajime, who wanted to join with Yue as fast as possible, let Kouki's group spar with the enemy to some degree.

Is it possible that the monkey-demon has some intelligence? The monkey-demons tried to take hostages. However, for Hajime, the thinking of that degree was too shallow. The monkey-demons that tried to take a hostage were all killed.

In those circumstances, the monkey-demons realized that they are no match and tried to withdraw, however…… it accidentally made the wrong choice. It was the worst decision they could have made.

The main cause is the peculiar magic of the monkey-demons – “Mimicry”. It is the same one as the one from the rust-colored Slime which made Hajime angry.

They also got the information of Yue’s group and it is possible for them to disguise themselves as the companions which Hajime’s group was separated from. However, unlike the rust-colored Slime, the monkey-demons were more intelligent.

In other words, it is possible for them to mimic actions which would disturb the others. They were able to think of that.

As a result, they used “Mimicry”. It was to be used against the most dangerous enemy with the person they value the most. It was the lowest method to shake them up.

The monkey-demons dragged their brethren that used mimicry from the back of the bush. Its appearance was that of Yue. The figure that was dragged along was badly bruised with an unladylike appearance. Because it is based on the information of the teleported team, the appearance is exactly the same as the real

one. (TL: Yep. They dug their own graves now.)

Of course, Hajime was able to see through the mimicry of the rust-colored Slime before, so he obviously knew it was not Yue.

Still, even with Yue's nudity and miserable appearance you can't tell the difference between the fake a real thing. When closing in the distance with his "Instant Movement" (TL: Shukichi, Flicker, whatever was used before.), Kouki's eyes, which almost looked at the "Mimicry"-Yue, were crushed.

At this point, though Hajime has already started losing his temper, it was still enough for his reason to work. However, the monkey-demons, despite their high intelligence, couldn't read the mood. They hit the "Mimicry"-Yue in front of Hajime with a smile. In addition the "Mimicry"-demon was imitating Yue's voice. […..Hajime, help me]. It became a serious matter because of that.

At that moment, everyone heard it. "BUCHI" was heard and something snapped. (TL: sound effects, think of it as a snapping sound)

And now, you can see a part of the sea of trees surrounded by flames of hell.

The scorched field which was 500 meters in every direction was already complete. If you look here and there you can see carbonized humanoids. In the wreckage, bee- and ant-demons were also seen.

Because it was an instant air strike, there will probably be not a demon that escaped unless some demons can make a space metastasis.

After Hajime burned everything in the sea of trees, he advanced while ignoring everything else.

[Don’t give up you both, please! Who else can stop Hajime-san other than Shia and Kaori!”

[But….]

[No buts. Why do you give up here? It ends when you give up! Hora, do your best! Hang in there! Dekiru, Dekiru! (2xYou can do it!) A maiden in love is invincible!]

The words from Shizuku, reminiscent of some coach, inspired Shia and Kaori. To be frank, Shizuku was desperate to make the two to go to Hajime as he was hard to approach now.

Without knowing the real intentions of Shizuku, Shia and Kaori nod to each other and jumped at Hajime while he was reloading “Orkan”.

[Hajime-san! Leave it at this!]

[That's right, Hajime-kun. You may drag Yue's group into it!]

He desperately glares at Shia and Kaori clinging to him. Hajime seems to be dissatisfied and utters a twisted expressions and raised his voice with an [A?, a?]

The appearance was, no matter how you look at it, one of a person that wanted to free his head. However, as he sees the two going [Ne?, Ne?], he regained his composure after a while.

[Fuuuuuu～～～～～ I understand. For now I'll leave it at this. I feel refreshed after shooting.]

Hajome relaxed his shoulders and called back the "Cross Bits" and put them away along with "Orkan" into the "Treasure Box". Shia and Kaori regained their composure and let out a relieved breath.

[My bad, I made you take care of me.]

[Ie, I also got mad at their methods. It was inevitable.]

[Un, really, it was the worst….. In a sense it was expected from the great labyrinth.]

When Hajime regained his composure he showed a wry smile, the two shaked his head while shaking their own heads in denial.

When Hajime was talking in the background of a part of the sea of tree that almost turned into wasteland, Shizuku stepped forward while having a cramp on her cheek.

[Naguno-kun, if you calmed down could you do something about Kouki ….]

With the words [Ah, Now that you mention it.] Hajime turns around to Kouki.

Kouki was shedding tears while sobbing. His appearance was indescribably pitiful. Kaori immediately used recovery magic when it was suggested by a glance.

[Uu, This feeling. Is it recovery magic? Oh, i can see light] (TL: Yes he sees light, maybe he should also see a tunnel and go into it?)

Kouki is liberated from the pain in his eyes and is looking joyfully. In addition, when Hajime who is the ringleader of the pain is spotted, he lifted his eyes and raises a voice of protest.

Shizuku explains the situation and the other party shows a dissatisfied face.

[You see, Amanogawa, though i am at fault, i couldn't hold back. It was a critical moment of whether my lover's improper appearance

was seen by another man. A mans …. eyes should be crushed, don't you agree?] (TL: Written Tennokawa, read as Amanogawa. This took me some time. Maybe i should write down their surnames or something….)

[What's with that "common sense?". Don't demand for an agreement in that tone. I almost became blind. In the first place, how can you tell the fake apart? Setting aside the real thing, when i think about how i tasted the pain because of the impostor…… I'm really angry.]

[You are foolish. Comparing your eyesight with Yue's half-nakedness….. is like putting a stone from the roadside with a high-class jewel on a scale.]

[My eyes aren't roadside stones!]

Kouki objects to Hajime and shows resentment towards him, while Hajime wards of his remark, he goes back to his search.

While not taking notice of the other party, Kouki begins to get even more irritated. Shizuku and Suzu try to soothe the situation. In a certain meaning, they were indebted to a familiar girl. It was an unpleasant common point.

At that time Hajime caught a presence with his "Sign perception". It will come at the speed of a small run.

Judging from the feeling of the sign, it seemed not to be a very powerful enemy. Therefore, Hajime looked back at the sea of trees with a doubtful look.

Shia also tilted her neck while gazing at the depths of the sea of trees.

Kouki also guessed that something approached them while looking at the manner of the two. It was a creature that resembled a goblin, while it made a rustling sounds (TL: “gasagasa” sounds). It had a dark skin with an ugly and distorted face, it wore a rag and was about 140 centimeters tall.

The goblin made a “Guga”-sound when it saw Hajimes appearance. Thought it cried with a somewhat excited voice, it movements stopped as it was startled by its own voice. It stopped and looked at Hajime. Because of its face, murderous intent was released.

In fact, it looked that way to Kouki.

Because he was not playing an active part in battle a feeling of irritation was felt by him and he made a rush to the goblin. He closed in the distance in the blink of an eye with his Holy Sword in hand.

However, the goblin which life was almost nearly cut, for a

moment, it's glance turned to Kouki, but it still did not show any behavior of taking a defensive action.

In an instant, even if Kouki had some doubts about it, he swung his Holy Sword down, because you couldn't be careless against demons in the great labyrinth.

At that moment, when the Holy Sword cladded in light, almost cut the strange goblin in two,

[What are you doing, idiot!] (TL: "Boke~", not "baka")

[Nnabbubera?]

Hajime who caught up in a moment, kicked Kouki away with a "Rolling Savate". A strange scream was raised and Kouki disappeared in the interior of the sea of trees, as if being run over by a dump truck.

Despite the demon before them, Shizuku was dumbfounded by the action of an ally getting blown away by a "Rolling Savate". She couldn't overlook the action, lifted her eyes in anger and rushed over to Hajime.

[Wait a moment, Nagumo-kun! What was that for!? No matter how you look at it, it was unreasonable. Kouki merely wanted to defeat the demon!]

[That's right! Or rather, is Kouki-kun alright? We must go look for him immediately.]

Shizuku and Suzu turned a look of criticism to Hajime. Shia and Kaori also did not understand the reason for Hajime's action.

However, Hajime did not hear their voices, he only gazed at the goblin in front of him.

In her eyes, Kouki was kicked away by Hajime's "Rolling Savate" without reason and Shizuku put herself on guard against the existence of the goblin.

Kouki turned up from the back of the sea of trees while rubbing his arm. Apparently, he seemed to have been alright. However, it seemed he was going to jump at Hajime, while anger was omitting from his whole body.

[….. Nagumo. Why did you do that? Why did you get in my way? The situation is different from a while ago. Don't make excuses. To protect a demon, are you sane?]

[It's not a demon.]

[What did you say?]

Without reacting to Kouki's anger and ignoring his muttering, he kneeled in front the still standing goblin. All members were astonished by the action and are doubting him more and more. Only Shia noticed something and muttered [No way….].

Hajime, who is meeting it's eyes on the same level, says some words that startle the others.

[….. You are Yue, right?]

[Gugya!]

[[[….What the?]]]

While Kouki and the rest were standing there with open mouths, Hajime did not hesitate and took the goblins hand and muttered [Yue…]. The goblin, with a joyful cry, answered [Gugya.].

[Ehm, Hajime-san. I would never have imaged it would be Yue-san. Uhm, I can only see a demon….]

[I, I can only see a demon. Is it really Yue?]

Shia and Kaori raised a voice of doubt, while looking at the goblin in front of them. The goblin begins to cry out/complain to Hajime with [Gugya , Gugogo, Gyaagya], while looking at both of them. It shoulders dropped, because it is not able to talk with them.

However, Hajime is there. There is nothing impossible for the man who loves Yue.

[Yes?, Yes~ The next thing you knew is that your appearance changed after the transfer?]

[! Gugya ! …… Gugogo]

[Fumu, So it only changed the body……]

[Gugya …… Gyagya , Gugi]

[The equipment was also lost?….Oh, you came after the markings i have left?] (TL: Either equipment or accessories and “makingu” is written in “english”)

[Gugutsu …… Gogagoga]

[That’s right, Hajime is where the explosions come from? Well, you aren’t wrong……]

[……Gyuuu, Gogo]

[Is that so, you aren't able to use magic…… But, you don't feel any other changes.]

[Gigigi , Gagi]

[Well, it should be alright. It's probably one of the trials. It was an inevitable start of the game]

[…… Gyuuu]

[And Tio and Sakagami weren't with you. Perhaps the same happened with them as with Yue. I still don't know anything about the demons here….. Well, Don't worry about it Yue. I'll do something about it as always.]

A normal conversation has been established. (TL: "normal")

[[[[[……..]]]]]

Kouki and the rest were speechless. Hajime didn't try to hide the fact that he was happy to be reunited with his lover and smiled.

[This kind of thing. Let's try "Reproduction Magic" out.]

[[[[[No, no, no, no, wait, wait, wait, wait]]]]]

[Oh, What's wrong?]

Kouki and the rest tsukkomied in a beautiful harmony and looked at Hajime with puzzled expressions. Everyone wanted to tsukkomi Hajime even more. Or rather, they weren't able to hold out any longer.

[Isn't it strange? It is strange, right? How can you communicate? Like nothing is going on!]

[Nothing is going on…. I talk because it is Yue?]

[Suzu only hears "Gugya"! No other words! How do you understand it?]

[No, with feelings… it is possible to talk with eyes.]

[Which reminds me, you always stare at each other…….It really is useful at such a time….. How the two of you communicate breaks through the center of the universe.]

[No, It's normal for a lover.]

[It's not normal? Obviously it is not normal…..What should we do. The "special" seat feels very far away.]

[Rather, Nagumo-kun. How did you notice it? Did you notice it before kicking me?]

[How did i, you know….. It's a simple story.]

Many tsukkomis were made and the others had tired expressions because Hajime answered with his common sense. At the end, Kouki uttered a question towards Hajime, who looked peacefully at the goblin shaped Yue,

[It's just that…. Her appearance may have changed, but i will never lose sight of Yue.]

[[[[[……Is that so?]]]]]

[…… Gugya]

With an expression that seemed like it was made of sugar, Yue (goblin Ver.) answered happily to Kouki's group.

[Putting that aside. Kaori, I leave the "Reproduction Magic" to you.]

[Ah, Un, I understand……. Well then, here we go Yue: "Absolute Imitation"!]

Kaori, whose eyes slightly regained sanity, was appealed by Hajime, turned towards Yue (goblin Ver.) and used “Reproduction Magic”. Needless to say, reproduction magic is an age of gods magic and the effects are enormous. Hajime’s group thought it would return her to her old appearance if they used it……..

[Gugya?]

[What? Why? One more time: “Absolute Imitation”!]

Yue’s appearance did not change back.

It’s like the “Reproduction Magic” isn’t activating. A silver light pours down over Yue, but Kaori’s magic is erased with a crunching sound. There is still no sigh of Yue’s appearance turning back.

[Why……]

[Gugya……]

Kaori is stunned and Yue (goblin Ver.) dejectedly drops her shoulders. Even the other members had worried expressions. In the middle of it, Hajime folded his arms and hit the temple while brooding over the phenomenon.

Hajime wore a difficult expression. Yue (goblin Vers.), while gripping the bottom of his clothes, looked up to him with an uneasy expression. She though that it would be also difficult for her to turn someone back with “Reproduction Magic”.

To such a Yue (goblin Ver.), Hajime returned from his deep thoughts and turned a vibrant smile towards her.

[Everything is alright, Yue. I’ve said it before, we fell into the trap, but a Game Over is impossible at the start. There must be a method to turn you back. I believe the “Reproduction Magic” doesn’t work because the quality of the age of gods magic is different. A special method needs to be used. It is a self-evident truth, that the challengers of the trial have “Reproduction Magic”. There would be no meaning to the trial otherwise. In any case, we will find the method to turn you back if we proceed further.]

[…… Gugya]

[Aa, don’t worry about it. And, i forgot about this. Can you hold this?]

[…… Gigi?]

Hajime passed Yue (goblin Ver.) a pair of jewel earrings. Because she transformed and can’t use magic, he guessed that she needs something and gave her an artifact —— “Telephatic Jewels”. (TL: actually stones, but they are earrings, so i choose “Jewels” instead of stones.)

[……Hajime?, Hajime? Can you hear me?]

Then, a lovely voice affected the space, the same way as Tio's transformation into a dragon does. Hajime's expression loosed up and he looked very happy while hearing a dear and nostalgic voice, even if it was only for a moment.

[Yeah, I can hear you, Yue. Your appearance changed….. but i'm glad you are alight.]

[……. Nn. I knew Hajime would notice it.]

[That's natural. I'm the one who understands you the most.] (TL: Missed this line, i'm sorry~ Did not notice till now)

[…… Nn. But i was happy. I love you.]

[……Stop it. It's embarrassing.]

[….. Fufu]

The air around them became sweet and pink, even though she was a goblin. Even if the appearance changed, they still create their own world. The eyes of the other members became like ones from dead fish.

[*Cough*! Isn't it about time? Yue, I'm glad you are alright.]

[N…… Kaori, too]

[Yue-san……. Zettai, zee~~tai! We will turn you back! For that reason, you can rely on me!] (TL: "Zettai" means "absolutely" ,left it in japanese, because reasons…..)

[….. Shia, Thank you. I can't fight now, so i'll count on you.]

Shia and Kaori somehow regained their spirit and were able to exchange words with Yue.

[Yue-san, well, i'm sorry about a while ago. I didn't notice it was you…. I almost injured you.]

[….Don't worry. It was inevitable. And i believed i wouldn't get injured….]

[Eeh, is it about me?]

[…. Even from the hero (lol), Hajime would protect me.]

[…… Is that so.]

Yue's casual remark performs a clean hit. While withdrawing dejectedly, Kouki raised a dry laughter. Shizuku and Suzu try to encourage him.

[Well then, to change Yue back and find Tio and Sakagami we should push forward and quickly conquer the labyrinth.]

With Hajime's command the party proceeded to advance in the sea of trees once again.

~ ~

[…..Hajime-san, even I see it. That is Tio.]

[I also understand it. No matter how you look at it, that is Tio.]

[….Rather, it would be a serious matter if it wasn't Tio.]

[Unmistakable, That is Tio.]

Hajime and the others turn their eyes towards the filth they see.

After 30 minutes they joined up with Yue, they saw a group of goblins. The group assaulted one goblin with kicks and punches.

However, there was no intention of killing it and an atmosphere like bullying was there. The goblin seemed not to be injured while receiving an assault from the group.

If it was only that it was bullied because it was weak, it would be pretty natural……

[No matter how i see it….. It's in ecstasy…..]

[Even though it has the face of a goblin….. We could never broadcast that.]

[Nagumo….. You, to that kind of person…. I don't feel like i could win it's heart.]

[Stop it, Amanogawa. I feel bad because i allowed that transformation…..I can only give up…..]

The goblin was floating in ecstasy, while the others where muttering. The appearance was reminiscent of a certain pervert. Or precisely, there could only be one such person.

[Tio… You are….. It's too late already…. Let's give up though it is regrettable.]

When Hajime shaked his head in a sad expression he quietly turned

his back. Yue and the rest followed him without any hesitation. Normally, Kouki would say [Never desert a nakama!], among other things, but now his gaze is wandering. (TL: As in ignoring it and it is “nakama”, which can mean friend, companion, comrade..etc.)

[Gu? Gyagya!]

And, at that moment, the goblin noticed Hajime’s group and raised its voice.

As a result, the assaulted goblin seemed to notice Hajime. It opened its eyes wide and rushed towards Hajime, despite receiving an assault earlier.

The goblin (Tio) was crawling in a high-speed on the ground, while the other goblins instinctively pulled away and backed away. In fact, while the goblins tormented and bullied it in high spirit, they felt [Huh? Somehow you are strange.] and now they were convinced about it.

[Gugyagyagya!!]

Meanwhile, the goblin (Tio) tried to jump with a rupa○dive into Hajime’s chest. Though they can’t understand goblin words, seen that, it was surely [Master～ This one longed to see you] or something along those lines. (TL: Forgot to mention. It’s probably “scuba dive”, i don’t understand the censor of the author here so i left it～)

Of course, Hajime responded and said,

[Don’t come near me, you pervert!]

Mekyo!

And he used an uppercut with his artificial arm.

The goblin (Tio) made an artistic backflip with four and a half turns, but did make a sound like it should have been. She crashed.

[…..Dead?]

Yue (goblin Ver.) peeked into the bush where the body of the goblin (Tio) fell. It’s tail was pierced by a tree branch.

Then, [Bikunbikun]! The body of the goblin (Tio) was twitching, while regaining consciousness. Though the body is that of a goblin, the endurance may be that of a dragon. Or, she became an even bigger pervert……

[GaGaGa! GoGo, Guge! Guga!]

The goblin (Tio) held her cheeks with both hands and screamed excited, while her body twisted around. And then, she began

looking at Hajime with feverish eyes.

Instinctively, Hajime starts pulling out “Donner” and Shia desperately tries to calm him. Kaori handed over a “Telepathic Stone” over to the goblin (Tio).

[Uh-huh, a “Telepathic Stone”….. Do thou hear me, Master? This one met the beloved Master and the first words and actions were those of abuse.]

[Damn it. Even if the body changes, the toughness does not. It should just die already.]

[Tsu! Aah? Beloved Master. The lack of pardon, this one can’t hold out. Mistress is useless without Master. Now, Master’s beloved servant has returned. It’s good how the mistress, who is reduced to ugliness, is attacked without restraint!]

Apparently, even if she changed into a goblin, she still felt the pleasure. It was already too late as Hajime said.

The goblins, while ignoring Tio who is lying on the ground saying [Do as you like! Burn or boil me!] and still twitching, were insta-killed by Hajime. And the search was resumed in silence.

The other members also did not seem to care about it and follow Hajime without turning their eyes.

[Ho, is this neglect play? Master can't be helped~ Ey, don't leave this one behind!? This one wants you to wait~ This one is still shaking because of the blow a while ago~]

Tio's voices echoes empty in the sea of trees. However, nobody stopped walking.

(TL: I used "it" rather than really translating it to english because i guess it makes more sense calling her an "object" rather than a "person".)

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ ~ ~ ~ ~ ~ ~ ~ ~ ~ ~ ~

The huge branch bends and attacks irregularly like a whip. Leaves dance like a blade and scatter around. Tree nuts are shot like cannonballs. A sudden spear-like root dashes out from the ground like the sharp point of a sword. Each of these attacks are fatal.

It is very similar to the Tree-Demon Hajime once fought in the [Orcus great Labyrinth]. The demon is a so-called "Trent". But then, when Hajime compared this Trent with the one he fought, the size is extremely different. It was 30 meters high and 10 meters in diameter.

Kouki, Shizuku, Suzu and the ogre-like creature are confronting the huge Trent.

[Guraaa!]

Meanwhile, while raising a shout like a real Ogre, it is Ryutaro who attacks with his fist to intercept the branches that come in.

Along the way, an Ogre was discovered fighting other Ogres. However, while the fight went on martial arts were seen – To be frank, it made refined karatemovements. It was obvious that it was Ryutaro.

Ryutaro might have been dead if they found him later as his status has fallen as Yue's and Tio's did. To go that far without running away, a tsukkomi was made about his muscle-brain.

And, Ryutaro finally joined with them as the last member. They reached the place with the gigantic tree which was obviously on a different size compared with the surrounding ones…… The gigantic tree said [Defeat me if you want to go further!] and began to rage as it said it.

At the present time, Kouki's group which did not show any results till now said [We will defeat this guy!] and rushed out. Hajime's group didn't care and started to spectate the fight. By the way, Kaori is participating as a healer.

[Gwuuuu. The attack is heavy.]

A branch with the thickness of a log approaches, while cutting

through the wind, and is received by Kouki with his Holy Sword. However, a groan leaked from the space of gritted teeth, while reminding how excessive the weight of the attack was.

Shizuku is busy with shuriken like leaves, which fly like throwing knifes. Suzu puts up a powerful barrier to somehow intercept the attack and Kouki desperately decides to use the opening to attack.

[Kuu, No good. Because Kaori is here, we do not have to worry about not being able to continue……]

The black katana “Tsumehirameki” was fully taken advantage of. Shizuku gridded her teeth while cutting branches and leaves one by one. (TL: Not sure 爪閃, something like claw flash/lighting)

Hajime’s words before entering the great labyrinth, sank into the bodies of Shizuku’s group. Without Hajime they would have been annihilated already. The confidence they gained in the [Orcus great Labyrinth] was crushed into pieces.

After worrying a little, Shizuku shouted towards Kouki.

[Kouki! Use “Supreme Destruction”!] (TL: 神威 not too sure, used chapter 122 as a reference)

[No, it’s not good. The chant is too long!]

[It’s alright! We will defend you without fail! Believe in us!]

Kouki was troubled what he should do about Shizuku’s suggestion.

It was obvious that the Trent before them was stronger than the demons of the woman of the Majin-tribe (TL: Demon-tribe). The attacks only come one by one, however the fight is only somewhat manageable with Kaori’s backup. They could lose their lives if they lose concentration even once. It would take more than an average nerve to expose oneself defenseless in such a time.

However, it was certain that without an overwhelming attack they can’t reach the Trent. At this rate, they wouldn’t be able to defeat it.

In addition……

Kouki recalls the time when Hajime met Yue again. A mutual trust that did not change, even when the appearance changed. Hajime saw the true nature of his lover in an instant and Yue did not show any unrest while she was almost killed by Kouki. Honestly, it would be a lie so say that he did not envy such a relationship.

Therefore, Kouki was determined. We have a relationship of mutual trust. It was absolutely not to prove that they will not lose to Hajime.

[I understand. I leave my back to you!]

[Yes, leave it to us. Ryutaro, Suzu! Let's gather up!]

[Roger!]

[Aye yo!]

Kouki did not move an inch while raising his Holy Sword over his head. Only his mouth moved while chanting. That state may be called defenseless, because his whole consciousness was poured into the chant of "Might of Heaven".

The Trent was sure not to miss that chance. The tree branches from right and left, a leaf blade which approached like a tornado from above, a shell of nuts from the front and the root of a tree attacks from the ground.

[This is sacred ground, the enemy of god will not be allowed to pass! "Absolute Virtue!"] (TL: "聖絶" not sure about this skill, also "YOU SHALL NOT PASS!" would also work, but i did not want to use a sketchy line～)

Suzu foresaw an attack and put up a barrier. Up till now her barriers have saved the party. The barrier withstood somehow the first barrage of attacks with small cracks.

[Tsuuuuu!]

Because of the consecutive attacks of the Trent, the barrier couldn't hold out and breaks. Suzu's groan resounds loudly, while Shizuku and Ryutaro (Ogre Ver.) are attacking in despair.

[Tsuuuaaa!]

[Oooooh!]

They were badly bruised in an instant because of the offensive waves of attacks. They intercept every attack with their skills, while screaming and roaring. Though two people get damaged and blood spilled out, they didn't let any attack pass to the back.

["Kaiten!"] (TL: Changing the world or turning the tide. Japanese sounds a bit better.)

With only one world echoing on the battlefield, Suzu's wounds are healed in an instant by Kaori's magic.

Though "Kaiten" is a recovery magic for multiple targets, it's effects are already above the advanced level. Most wounds are healed in no time. After getting Nointo's body, Kaori was inspired to create new healing magic. It was possible to heal with "Regeneration Magic", however the magic consumption from the age of gods magic is larger than normal magic.

Suzu puts up a barrier again and earns a few seconds, however it gets destroyed again. Shizuku and Ryutaro put their lives on the line again. Kaori immediately heals their damaged bodies and Suzu puts up another barrier. They repeat this three times.

Finally, from Kouki's body, a huge amount of magic gushes out and covers his Holy Sword. The Holy Sword is cladded in light like the sun and Kouki takes a deep breath.

And,

[————Everyone! Here i go! "Supreme Destruction" !!]

He unleashes his trump card, his strongest magic. A huge torrent of light strikes the ground and flies forward. A leaf blade is blown off, the tree branch gets eliminated, the bombardment of the nuts is swallowed and the Trent is hit directly.

The roaring sounds and light explode, while the surroundings are dyed white.

[I did it!]

Kouki gives a smile of satisfaction and shouts. Hajime watches in the back, while stuffing a small cake into his mouth, and mutters [Aah, he raised the flag…..].

The flag was certainly raised.

The light and dust clears up……and the Trent is unhurt.

[It’s a lie, right……]

Kouki is stunned and makes a lifeless voice. It wasn’t only Kouki. Shizuku’s group also were shocked because Kouki’s last resort was useless.

The Trent lets out murderous intent towards Kouki’s group and starts attacking in waves again.

Chapter 127 – The Pseudo-Trent

“Supreme Destruction” ———— Is a power like the name says. A power worthy as a hero’s trump card, a magic of the highest grade. Kouki came as a beginner into this world, leveled up, gained experience and was able to slaughter all enemies with his special technique.

However, the Trent emerged unscathed from the dust.

[Impossible…..]

Kouki was unable to move because of that fact. Shizuku realized something and raises her voice.

[Kouki! Look at that! It wasn’t a direct hit!]

[Eh?]

When Kouki looked into the same direction as Shizuku, he saw a large amount of trees scattered around, broken into small fragments. Apparently, Kouki’s “Supreme Destruction” did not hit the Trent directly. It was prevented by a large amount of trees in the front.

Though there shouldn't be any trees there? Where on earth did such a great amount appear from? The questions from Kouki's group were answered by the Trent.

At that time, the Pseudo-Trent gave out a pale light. A large number of trees spread out from the base and grew in a very great force.

[…… Unique Magic.]

Suzu muttered. That opinion was right. It was the unique magic of the Trent of the "Sea of Trees". It was freely able to create a large amount of trees and manipulate them freely.

[This, this is bad! This is sacred ground, the enemy of god will not be allowed to pass! "Absolute Virtue!"]

Suzu was momentarily dumbfounded, but was able to invoke "Absolute Virtue" immediately. Attacks poured in from all directions, while a shining barrier was deployed with Suzu's group inside.

The branches which had a sharpened point like a spear gave an intense shock to the barrier one after another.

Not only the Trent, but also the surrounding trees also produced a similar attack. It seemed they wold get crushed to death by the almost oppressive amount of resources.

The “Absolute Virtue” won’t be able to hold out without a chant. It already cracked here and there, it did not seem to hold out for another several seconds. And, when Suzu’s barrier gets broken, will the others hold out till she deploys it again?…..Only an optimist would judge it doable.

[No good….anymore….]

Suzu realizes by the magic consumption, that the barrier will soon break and informs the others.

Kouki looks at Suzu. [Then i have to use “Limit Break” to survive!] He made his resolve. There is no choice but to accept that they need to use two of their trump cards directly at the first stage after entering a great labyrinth.

However, after guessing Kouki’s intentions, assistance came from the rear.

[“Forever Engraved”]

The reproduction magic “Forever Engraved”, which Kaori used – regardless of the substance of the object – can regenerate everything to the state one second ago every one second it is used.

Suzu’s “Absolute Virtue” which seemed to break at any moment,

gets surrounded by a silver light. After one beat, the barrier recovered to its dignified appearance af if nothing happened. Even after the attacks of the Trents , it returns to its original state. “Absolute Virtue” is repaired every second.

[Wow, Kao-rin! Thank you!]

Suzu, while maintaining the barrier, looks back and thanks Kaori. Kouki and the others slighty relax their bodies because they got of the predicament and look to the back.

There, the Trents surrounded Hajime’s group like it did to Kouki’s. Hajime and the others did not seem to care about it.

Four “Cross Bitts” were arranged by Hajime in the surroundings and a triangular pyramid was spread as a barrier. (TL: Like this: http://www.math-salamanders.com/images/lgs-3d-shape-triangular-based-pyramid.gif) The space interception type produce a spatial magic “Four-Point Barrier”.

“Reproduction Magic” isn’t even used and still there are no signs that the barrier gets shaken. It seems to be a totally impregnable castle wall, without allowing any attack to come near.

[That seems to be the limit. I thought they would hold out longer…..]

Hajime murmured while looking down at Kouku who had a

complicated look.

[U~n, Wouldn't they be fine if the hero-san uses his "Limit Break"?]

[I wonder. Well, if he goes over his limit maybe…… However, what will happen after he weakens after that? It is unlikely that he can recover from the fatigue of his "Limit Break" with healing magic.]

[…..It may be possible with Reproduction Magic.]

[I don't want to use it as the magic consumption is big. It's still too early for that.]

[Fumu. Well then, we should clear up here before the hero-boy uses it.]

Hajime was wondering if Kouki and the others would be acknowledged to have cleared the great labyrinth. Kouki and the others should obtain the age of gods magic , because [If Nointos appear in a great amount we could use the "throw the heroes at them"-strategy.]

So, they should raise their military strength in the great labyrinth [Appeal with: "We should fight hard!"] Or so he wished…….

Because it is unknown what may happen beyond this point, it's not preferable to use age of gods magic in succession because of its magic consumption. Even though they have magic stones stocked up, they don't know when Yue and Tio can turn back and are able to fight.

[Master, this one thinks you should not worry too much about the outcome of the battle.]

[Yes? What do you mean? Is it about the concept of the great labyrinth?]

The goblin (Tio) advises Hajime who thinks deeply about the current situation. Despite her being a pervert, her words and knowledge are very thoughtful. Though, she is still a helpless pervert.

[Yes. The concept is probably "testing the bonds".]

[Bond….. Speaking of it, the word was also on the stone tablet at the entrance.]

[That's right. Not only to test the bonds with the sub-humans, but also to test the bonds when capturing the labyrinth. Is it not so? See through the imitations, accept the companions which changed. It is truly testing the "deep woven bonds".]

[I see….. If there is a goal after clearing this trial you could call

this a “guidepost”. If it’s that way, then there might be no problem if I clean up the battle. Amanokawa and the others only need to get over the “testing the bonds something” what comes after this.]

[That’s right. Well, it is only a guess in the end.]

It is still a very reliable guess.

With understanding that, Hajime makes his decision and lets out a sigh. Even though he strengthened Kouki and other with the artifacts greatly, the great labyrinth reads the memory after the capture and there is a possibility it won’t accept them if he makes them too strong and so he waited.

Hajime glanced at the Goblin (Tio) and lets out another sigh. Tio occasionally gives sharp consideration and makes suggestive advice because she lived far longer than him. He’s reminiscent that the race is supposed to be noble and respectful.

Originally she is thoughtful and considerate and has the perfect nature of the Dragon-Race which Yue longed for. Every man would be captured by her beauty as she’s a very attractive lady.

Even though she’s already a pervert…..

[Really, is it my fault?] Hajime worried in his mind. And he looks at the Goblin (Tio) and regretted it.

[Mu? Master's look of pity at this one….haa, haa, this is in itself….. already…Mistress is no good without Master.]

[Haa~]

Tios wriggling with her Goblin body gave out unpleasant feelings.

Hajime looks at the Trent which attacks without restraint but still can't tear Suzu's "Absolute Virtue" and Hajime's "4-Point-Barrier". In addition it still generates more trees. The surrounding view was already filled with trees.

[Taniguchi. I'll burn everything now. Don't undo the barrier if you don't want to die.]

[Eh?]

Hajime warns Suzu before unleashing an attack while she is defending from attacks from all directions.

Suzu suddenly answers dumbfounded with a great voice. Kouki and the other turn dubious expressions towards Suzu. The expressions will soon turn into dumbfounded ones.

Outside of the barrier, Hajime throws a moonlike-ring (Getsurin)

into the air and takes out a remote control with an induction stone out of the “Treasure Box”. With the power of “Wind Claw” and “Sign Perception” the surrounding trees were easily dissected and thrown into the air. (TL: Actually the author has written “sky”, but i choose to change it to “air”. Makes somehow more sense. I’ll use “Getsurin” from now on, just needed to explain what it is.)

The numbers exceeded 20. It’s impossible to make them get battle mobility, but it’s easy to change the tide.

And in the next moment, black liquid scatters around the Trent like raid because of the Getsurin. The black liquid scattered around is a tar that burns at 3.000°C which even melts Fullum ore.

Hajime transfers a large amount of tar stored in the “Treasure Box” by using the gate function of Getsurin.

While trying to figure out what Hajime was doing, Shia and the other let out a [Uwaa~] and their eyes turned towards Hajime.

Certainly, it was effective to deal with the Trent and all the trees it quickly generated……..

While the girls gazed at Hajime, he threw a small live coal towards Getsurin.

In that moment,

Gooooooooo !! (TL: Not sure how to translate sound effects ゴォオオオオオオ！！)

Everything in sight was dyed instantly in flaming red.

The Trents, which didn't even worry when the tar was released, are now surrounded by a prison of flames of 3,000°C and instantaneously burned by it. Though they don't have vocal cords, it seems they are screaming in agony.

The spectacle may be mistaken for hell which has manifested on this world. Now, every object outside of the barrier is certainly carbonized……No, even cinders might not remain.

The tar does not burn for long, but the heat is terrific. The hellfire produced by Hajime extinguished naturally after 15 minutes. However, because the Trents ran wild, it even spread to normal trees, so Kaori managed somehow to extinguish the flames with water magic.

[We joined up with Yue and the other already, so i had no problems burning everything down….]

[Hajime-kun…. Do you even think before destroying everything?]

[Where Hajime-san is, there is also destruction…. Father and the

others might think of two new names if they see it.]

[……Hajime not restraining himself….Wonderful.]

[This one agrees, Yue. Merciless Master…. This one gets wet.]

Hajime releases the “4-Point-Barrier” and walks toward Kouki and the others who have somewhat tired expressions, while Kaori turns to Hajime looking troubled. The members other than Kaori are saying [That’s very Hajime-like.] and [As expected from Hajime.]. With satisfaction on her face she nods in agreement.

[Nagumo-kun….A little while ago…. No, it’s nothing. A rocket launcher has already been fired at random and cluster bombs were scattered around. This much is already normal for him. Therefore, get a grip, myself……]

Kouki and the others made a complicated look, as if they are really safe. At the same time, Kouki glanced towards Hajime and bits his lips tightly.

Kouki wasn’t able to knock it down even with his last resort and Hajime did it as if it was a side-job. Even if he was persuaded to come here to obtain the age of gods magic, will he really obtain it while being helped……? Such uneasiness was welling up in his mind.

Kouki averts his glance from Hajime and tries to shake off his

negative thoughts and looked back in panic as he heard “Mekimeki”-sounds from behind.

[Did it regenerate?]

Like Kouki said, a big tree grew rapidly from the carbonized ground while rumbling the earth.The Trent grew in no time. Exactly how a “Regeneration” would feel like.

Kouki and the others took a stance, however the regenerated Trent showed no signs of attacking. After standing for a while it started to make a cave. The trunk tears open, the left and right side crack and an open space in the middle is created.

[I thought it was a middle-boss, but it was also the door which goes to the next stage.]

Hajime advanced towards the cave without nodding or hesitating as he was convinced. Yue and the others follow him. Kouki and the others who assumed a stance, followed him in a hurry.

The inside of the cave was without any special characteristics. However, after everybody entered it, the entrance in the cave shut them in and their feet began to shine at the same time.

[Another teleportation…..]

It was the same magic as the one at the entrance of the great Tree. Hajime strongly drew the Goblin (Yue) and the Goblin (Tio) towards him while muttering.

Because those two can't fight right now, even a trivial thing would be fatal. He wants to do something, even if it's a trifle thing. After coming this far, it's impossible to lose these two.

[…..Hajime.]

[Ma, Master…. Uu, this one is troubled by your gentleness.]

Were Hajime's worries transmitted to them? It looked more like the two goblins were really happy, rather than being scared of the transportation. Tio showed a very uncommon embarrassed (dere) side.

Shia and Kaori jumped towards Hajime with the words [Ah, me too~] and wanted to hug him……..

However, the attempt was one step too slow. As for Hajime's view, the scene where two people stretched out a hand was painted out with enormous light at the end.

Chapter 128 – Ideal World

Chrip, Chirp, Chirp

The singing of birds and sunlight invading in the space of the curtain informs that morning has come. Responding to the sound, the master of the room covers his head in his futon (TL: Japanese bed) and it turns into an impregnable fortress.

And in the next moment a click resounds plainly and the devil raised a roar. (TL: Alarm clock = devil. I understand, same for me~ Die alarm clocks. Every one of them should be killed by a hero.)

Jiriririririri !! (TL: Strange alarm. Well…. Could be worse…..)

A noise destroys the silence of the morning in the room [Wake up, boke!]

[Uuu……]

The master of the room tries to protect himself from the devil in his fortress, but it's impossible to do that forever. He extended his arm from the futon and in an instant "Banban"! The palm looks for the devil and hits it.

The head of the devil is caught at the third time by the arm because of the experience of the devil subjugation for 10 years and he succeeded in silencing the screaming.

However, the act that has continued on countless occasions wasn't hard work at all. The arm of the master of the room dropped in exhaustion and was withdrawn straight into the fortress again. And he stopped moving after that.

Immediately after that,

[Hajime~ Wake uuuuup!! Don't go back to sleep ! Wake up already~!]

A familiar voice is heard from downstairs —— The voice of a mother is demanding to wake up. The master of the room, Hajime, has certainly heard the voice in his half consciousness. [Resistance to the bitter end!] The defence of the fortress is gets even stronger after saying that.

[No good after all~. Mou, now really, every morning. Sorry~ Can i count on you again?]

[——] (TL: Really. They were that way. I only changed the brackets. Don't look at me that way. I'll get aroused.)

The voice of the mother is heard again from downstairs. It reached Hajime's ears because it was spoken loud on purpose so that

Hajime hears it even if it was on the other side of the door.

Not thinking of the voice of the mother which has given up, already knowing who she's talking with and what will happen, Hajime still had no intention to get up obediently.

After all, every morning is a happy morning for Hajime……

A "konkon"-knocking sound echoes.

However, because there is no reaction, the person understood the reason for it and opened the door immediately. The person calls out to the dumpling gently while getting closer to the bed with small steps.

[…….. Wake up, Hajime.]

[……]

Still, no reaction. A little more, he wants to hear voice more till he fully awakes.

[……Hajime, wake up. If you don't wake up……]

[……..]

She gently uses her hand shaking him. A small hand can be seen over the futon and Hajime's cheeks begin to soften.

[….I'll attack you. Sexually.]

[Un, I'll wake up, so will you stop saying such a vivid thing in the morning?]

He wakes up immediately after feeling chills down his spine! And the futon was pushed aside. (TL: I don't really understand why the author used an "!" here. I let it inside, but it feels strange.)

[Morning, Yue.]

[……N. Morning, Hajime.]

Hajime smiled for a while with his dear lover and savored the first happiness of the day.

Hajime is walking to school while suppressing a yawn. Yue is besides him and looks upwards towards him. Such a gesture can only be called cute….. Hajime is looking at Yue while they are going besides each other and is busy restraining himself.

Yue is wearing a blazer from Hajimes school. Her short skirt is

fluttering gently while she goes backwards, turns her head towards Hajime and speaks to him.

[……..Again, staying up late?]

[Un, I was doing the work father asked me to. It was morning before i noticed.]

[……It's good to be enthusiastic, but take care of yourself. Please don't overwork yourself.]

[Un, I'll be careful.]

Hajime and Yue are having a gentle conversation. They create a sweet atmosphere between them. A long time passed since Yue became Hajimes lover, however, the passion between them has not declined at all. For Yue to be near Hajime, the homestay was forced into Hajimes house and the transfer procedure to his school was finished very quickly.

Suddenly, the pretty girl with blonde hair became Hajime's lover and it became a fuss at the beginning. After all, Hajime is a genuine Otaku that spends most of his time helping his father who manages a game company. It's unimaginable why Hajime got such a beautiful lover.

His mother doubted it and panicked because she thought it was because of hypnotism and his father thought he had the ability to

make delusions real. Even at school, after it was revealed that Yue was Hajime's lover, it became the hottest topic of the whole school.

Afterwards, it is needless to say that the boys were envious of Hajime. Yue is like Yue is, she was waging war with several girls for some reason. (TL: Wait what? Why?)

Such things continued for several months. It stopped only recently and their school life calmed down. Thus, because they overcame the storm, they can now leisurely stroll to school together.

Hajime, while looking at Yue and her blonde hair which reflects the light and shines brightly, tried to recall how they have met.

By chance, he helped Yue who was caught by some thugs and in a desperate fight he somehow manage to defeat one and rescued her. His face becomes hot when he recalls that she kissed his neck as gratitude towards him. After that they became lovers very fast. (TL: Author used "rapidly", but that sounds somewhat strange.)

(However, even thought i am an Otaku i managed to beat them. Humans can somehow manage it when they are desperate.)

Hajime smiles involuntarily, remembers his act of rashness, but somehow feels uneasy.

(……Huh? Where did i meat Yue again? Why was I at such a place? Huh?)

It’s obvious that Yue is a foreigner and became a homestay student. That means he should have met her in a foreign country. Hajime himself remembers that he met Yue in a foreign country.

However, where was that actually? He wasn’t sure and his thoughts were hazy. As soon as he noticed that, those doubts came battered like being spilled from a bookshelf in his memory. The uneasiness and doubts swelled up in Hajime one after another.

[….Hajime!]

[Uwa, what happened? Why did you shout out so suddenly. You surprised me.]

Yue normally never talks in such a loud voice while commuting to school. Hajime’s hearth almost jumped and he came back to reality from his whirlpool of thoughts.

After that, Hajime looks at Yue who has a somewhat sulky expression.

[…..Because you ignored me many times when i called you.]

[What? Really? Sorry! I was thinking for a moment…….]

Yue turns around suddenly in a bad mood. She was sulking and Hajime's eyebrows turned into the letter of eight. (TL: "/\ ") At that time, Hajime's doubts disappeared completely.

Yue shows a mischievous smile and Hajime repeatedly apologizes. She did not sulk at all, she only wanted Hajime to care about her. She was happy that her plan succeeded.

To such a Yue, Hajime lowers his eyebrows to the character of eight again [Can't do anything about this girlfriend] and he wears a troubled look on his face with a smile. However, he wasn't really troubled like his expression looked like. He was rather happy.

While doing a brilliant turn towards Hajime again, Yue lines up next to Hajime and says something with a small voice.

[…….Doze off. In happiness. Look only at me.]

That voice did not reach Hajime. While Hajime looked at Yue who snuggled up to him, his eyes gently softened.

When Hajime arrived at the school and was changing his shoes at the shoe cabinet, a soft impact is transmitted to his back. It was certain that someone bumped into him and it was a happy feeling for any man. (TL: Come on! Oppai attack! The attack was very effective!)

[Hajime-san~! Yue-san~! Good morning!]

[n……. Good morning, Shia.]

[Uwa, Shia-san ! Let me go! I always tell you to stop hugging me when you greet me.] (TL: Wtf Hajime? Shia-san? Is your head alright? I guess not….)

[To take away my happiness….. This is cruel! At this point you should take responsibility and marry me!]

[You skipped some steps! Anyway, let go! Highlight is disappearing from Yue's pupils. She stares without blinking!] (TL: Author has written "highlight" so I left it. This does sound strange in english. Think of her eyes looking dead or something.)

As for Hajime, he tries to tear of Shia from his back while not being too happy about the feeling on his back.

Shia is also a foreigner like Yue and came to japan to study abroad. Also by chance, he helped her and her family who were attacked by a thug and she repeats to show gratitude with repeating extreme physical contact.

The trademark headband (□□□□□□) she's wearing is shining in a blue color in addition to her white hair and her innocent smile she

is popular regardless of gender and she also has a fan club.

Honestly, I am happy that such a girl is showing me goodwill, even though i am confused. It isn't so that i don't think of what would have happened if i had not met Yue earlier than her.

However, there is no meaning in thinking about such IFs. With Yue as the best lover, Shia's aggressiveness is becoming a headache for Hajime.

Though Shia's goodwill which she turn to Hajime with her excessive physical contact makes Yue have a bad mood, they get along well and they may be called best friends.

That way, they aren't able to be unkind to each other, and somehow they are stuck in a dilemma. Even though Yue wants to monopolize Hajime, she shows no signs to ditch Shia, her best friend. To Hajime is their relationship mysterious.

(Good grief, saving two girls from delinquents and receiving their goodwill. Which Gal-game is this? Moreover, a harem-route to be OK is realistically impossible. …… What? Come to think of it, was Shia always wearing such a headband? Somehow, more, like, a different feeling…….)

While Hajime watched Shia's headband and searching his memory, suddenly both his arm were wrapped in a happy feeling.

While pressing such heinous fruits (deadly weapons) against Hajime while talking, they pulled him towards the classroom. (TL: No joke intended. He really has written “brutal/fiendish/heinous/ evil fruits” 凶悪な果実)

[Why do you make such a difficult face in the morning? If we don’t go to class soon the first bell will ring.]

[n….The teacher will scold us.]

Warm sunlight is entering from the window and raises the temperature gradually, however because of two people it becomes midwinter in the blink of an eye.

Hajime is paying attention to not spend too much time with those two at school. From the mouths of those two the words “classroom”, “first bell” and “teacher” escaped. So he had no choice and felt a discomfort in his chest.

When he entered the classroom, in that moment, the looks of envy and jealousy were emitted from the men and stick all to Hajime. Because of Yue’s and Shia’s aid he doesn’t get chased directly, their piercing gazes still hurt……..

(N? What is it? How to call this….. nostalgic? Huh, why, Why do i feel that way?)

Hajime couldn’t understand his own feeling and sat down on his

seat while twisting his neck and being even more confused.

Immediatly after that, one girl from the class approaches Hajime.

[Hajime-kun, Good Morning. You came at the last-minute today. You should come earlier.]

[……]

The girl — Shirasaki Kaori — who greeted him is not inferior to Yue or Shia even if you compare them. She was the School Madonna before Yue and Shia came. Also, she is also a girl who favors Hajime for some reason.

She has called out to Hajime often already before, but he did not think it was because she had courtesy for him. However, because Yue named herself as Hajimes lover, Kaori started to make her goodwill shown towards Hajime as she knew she had feelings for him. Because of that it was impossible to run away from misunderstandings.

Kaori came closer to Hajime with “patapata” steps which sounded happy and Hajime showed a troubled smile……This time however, because Hajime was caught in his thoughts he didn’t answer Kaori.

(That line…..somewhere….Damn it, What is it? Why did i think of that as “nostalgic”? Though it is the usual…. Today is somewhat strange.)

[Hajime-kun…. Why do you ignore me? Well… Have I made you angry somehow?]

When hearing the trembling voice, Hajime looks up and sees Kaori with a tearful expression. Hajime noticed that he had been ignoring Kaori's greeting and answered in a hurry.

[No, sorry. That's not it. I was thinking for a moment. I'm really sorry. Morning, Shirasaki-san.]

[Oh, i'm glad~ . Un, Morning Hajime-kun. And don't i always tell you i want you to call me "Kaori"?]

Kaori puffs out her cheecks and shows her dissatisfaction. Because of such a lovely gesture, all the young men that looked at Hajime were almost all shot. (TL: Cuteness overload.)

[No, Shirasaki-san. That's a bit….]

[It's Kaori. Call me that?]

[No, that's…..]

[Ka-o-ri!]

[That, err, Ka, Kao…..]

Muu! Hajime is overwhelmed by Kaori as she wants him to call her by her given name. And when he was almost persuaded to do so,

[…….Don’t trouble Hajime.]

The savior appeared. It was Yue.

Yue protected Hajime and cut in between Hajime and Kaori with an imposed stance.

[Muu, you came out, Yue. For the time being, Morning.]

[…..n, for now, Morning. Kaori.]

While Yue and Kaori greet each other, an icy enviroment between them is created. They officially recognize each other as rivals in school.

Warm sunlight enters from the window and it becomes warmer, however between those two, it becomes midwinter suddenly. “Cold War” —— The battle over Hajime between Yue and Kaori is known not only by the students, but also by the teachers.

Though those two stare at each other for a while, there is no malicious feeling there. In spite of the war of love between them, those two, in a dignified manner, collide with each other openly.

For Hajime it wasn't too strange, rather than rivals, they were like close friends which did not hate each other, but had a quarrel like friends.

Meanwhile the bell rang, and the head teacher entered the classroom. Yue and Kaori who had been exchanging glances returned to their seats quickly.

In the first period was the english class from Tio-sensei. A beauty that for some reason likes Hajime. She is an erotic female teacher that always without exception sexually harasses Hajime……

Immediately make some disciplinary dismissals! While thinking that, he glares at her while neglecting the harassment and she stops immediately her sexual harassment. For some reason, she tries to hide her expression which is red and her shoulders shake…….. Hajime got depressed because he thought she was scared of his face. (TL: Tio stays Tio, wherever she is….)

After school, Hajime and Yue were walking besides each other towards a certain place. Shia, Kaori and for some reason Tio-sensei wanted to come with them, but Yue cut them down with a single strike of a sword. (Of course, only in a mental meaning.) Because they were temporarily immobilized, only those two were able to go.

The place at which they arrived at while enjoying an innocent conversation was a kindergarten.

At that place, Myuu, the daughter of Remia which was mothers friend (TL: Speaks of Hajime's mother probably) was there and they came for her because Remia was busy. And this picking-up, until Remia comes back, became the daily life of Hajime's family which continues since long ago.

[Aa Pa…… Onii-chan! Yue-neechan!] (TL: She almost said almost "papa". I want to take her home. Onii-chan = brother, Neechan = sister, most will know. Just in case)

Hajime and Yue went through the front gate of the of the kindergarten and Myuu came running to them with small steps. She was smiling with her whole face. Unconsciously, Hajime and Yue had a warm and fluffy feeling. The two catch Myuu which rushed to them and embraced her with a "gyu".

[Myuu, it's no good to dive/jump into us. It's dangerous you know? Also, did you just try to call me "Papa"? Really, don't do that.]

[……..I wouldn't mind being called "Mama".]

Hajime almost break out in cold sweat because of how Myuu wanted to call him.

Myuu called Hajime “Papa” before and it became a hassle as other parents also were there. Remia was a widow, Myuu didn’t know her father and they thought that the gentle older man, Hajime, was her father.

However, calling Hajime, an active high school student, “Papa”…… Naturally, some rumors were spread.

Moreover, Yue is also a foreigner the same as Myuu is. It should be understood what the other parents were imagining. Namely, they thought she got pregnant somewhere between primary school and middle school!

When Yue heard about the misunderstanding, the misunderstanding escalated further as she only blushed without denying it. Yue imagined making a child with Hajime, but the timing for that was just too bad.

In one way or another, the teachers of the kindergarten solved the misunderstandings. On a later date, Remia has written a letter so that the misunderstanding doesn’t spread further so that it disappears from Hajime’s town. Honestly, he almost was breaking out in cold sweat.

Moreover Remia is a widow and it was possible he would aim for her next time? A lady-killer with a docile face! And most turned cautious eyes towards him. Recently, he has given up on that already. Still, more or less, he doesn’t let her call him papa.

They walk with Myuu between them while holding hands home.

From time to time, they swing Myuu forth and back like on a swing while chatting. If you look from the side, it completely looks like a family.

[……..Myuu, what were you doing today?]

[Ehm, today…….] (TL: E to ne, kyou wa…… KAWAI, damn it! Yes, I like Myuu. Problems with that? Long live cute things!)

Myuu answers Yue what she was doing today. While seeing such a Myuu, Yue looks at her very gently. It is full of love and warmth overflows. Somehow, Hajime has been fascinated by such a divine Yue.

It takes a while till a ill-humored voice reaches Hajime.

[Mou, pap—- Onii-chan! Do you hear what Myuu is talking about?]

[Eh? Aah, sorry, sorry. I was spacing out for a bit.]

Hajime smiles with a wry smile while apologizing to Myuu which is angry and lifts her arm. And to please her, Hajime starts to cuddle with her.

Though Myuu restores her mood very fast as she was held, she doesn’t want to let go and tries very hard to still pretend to be angry at him. It was obvious for Hajime, but he pretended not to

notice it and Hajime was still soothing Myuu.

At that time, a faint quarrel finally reached their ears. A woman's voice and of some men. Judging by the voice, the female seems to be in a pinch. Hajime and Yue look at each other and peek into the alley where the voice was heard.

[What a template is this….] (TL: Probably meant stereotype, but has written template.)

[…….Enemy of women, won't be forgiven.]

Like you can imagine it, some men were trying to forcefully pick-up a girl.

Hajime twisted his head while holding Myuu and thinking what to do. The enemy's strength wasn't very big. Judging from their postures, they only seemed like small punks. It wouldn't be a big deal, even if they were armed.

Their potential was analyzed (□□□□□□□□□) and Yue on his side plunged forward to the punks.

They have turned towards Yue as they have realized that she approaches them and were momentarily stunned by her pretty face and were smiling, however immediately they smiles became vulgar. Their eyes were seeing new prey.

Because of their glances, Hajime got angry. However, before he was able to able to something, Yue got in between the pick-up guys in a moment. In addition, in only a moment, their joints made a “bekibaki” (breaking) sound and Yue got control of them immediately.

Believe it or not, the guys were beaten up without a chance to speak. They fell on the ground while screaming in pain after getting hit.

Yue didn’t show any mercy and the girl’s face became stiff and Yue went back to Hajime immediately. And they began walking home again. Not even three minutes had passed after the commotion. A short-term battle, that reminded of a certain space hero. (TL: Don’t know the reference.)

[Yue-neechan is strong～! How coool～!]

[….N, Myuu will be trained when you grow up.]

Myuu’s future is a bit worrisome. Myuu praises Yue, however Hajime feels irritated as he wasn’t able to do anything as a man. Even with his troubled look, he fell in love again with his lover.

(Huh? Was Yue so strong in close combat? Moreover, why was I able to analyze their strength……..)

While holding Myuu with his right hand, Hajime unconsciously puts his other hand to his thigh. And there, his hand is searching for something. However, that “Something” is not there and he feels some kind of discomfort.

At night.

After dinner and taking a bath, Hajime threw himself onto his bed. His hair was not dry yet, and he had begun brooding over something.

He had a strange feeling. It should be his unchanging daily life…… but his instincts say something like [This is wrong!] and his happy daylie life got denied. [Wake up!] it said.

Hajime scratched his head while being irritated.

At that time, knocking-sounds unexpectedly sounds.

[……..Hajime?]

[Aa, yeah I’m here.]

Yue opened the door and entered the room.

In a negligee. White sexy arms and feet were shown. Yue came closer to Hajime and noticed that he had wet hair and scolded him! While having a scolding gaze, she arrived at his bed.

In addition, she began to dry off Hajime's hair while he was lying on the bed.

[N……It's dry now. It's bad to leave it wet. You'll catch a cold.]

[You are right, Thank you, Yue.]

[Nn.]

Hajime was thanking her and Yue hugged him from behind.

And she buries her face in Hajime's neck like a spoiled child. Both of her arms invade Hajime's clothes from the back and start to caress Hajime's chest. After Remia picks up Myuu, Yue becomes a spoiled child.

As long as Myuu is there, they can't be spend much time as lovers, so some fault lies in that. When there are holidays, Yue is sulking pretty much as he cares for Myuu too much. It's inevitable to some degree, however her desire to monopolize him is strong.

(She is stronger than any thugs, full of love and kindness, she loves me and is the best girlfriend there is. …..I am satisfied with this

everyday life. I should feel blessed. Yet…. Why am i dissatisfied) What is wrong? Why is there a “moyamoya”-feeling in my chest?)

While feeling the softness and the temperature of Yue’s body, Hajime tries to ignore the uneasiness which swells up. To such a Hajime Yue whispers something to his ears.

[…..Everything is fine. Do not worry. I’ll make Hajime happy.]

[Yue……]

[…….Look only at me. Everything is fine, i am here. Hajime’s ideal. Forever at your side.]

[……..]

While melting in such a sweet whispering, Hajimes consciousness began to fade. At this rate, how sweet would it be to sleep while being spoiled by Yue.

(That’s right. Yue is here. There isn’t anything more important. … There shouldn’t be. I don’t need anything else. Even if i would need to throw everything away…… My ideal lover is besides me. Only that……)

His consciousness is breaking off. Losing strength in his body, without change his self is being comfortable soaked in warm

feelings.

Then, while all his dissatisfaction are on the verge of disappearing,

——I defend Yue, Yue defends me. With that we are the strongest. We'll defeat everything and overcome the world. (TL: He starts speaking here with "Ore" again.)

Suddenly, strange words appear in his mind. Hajime consciousness surfaces rapidly and he opens his eyes wide.

——Aa~, If you like, Yue can come too?

His voices echoes again. It was the promise of taking Yue back to his home.

Afterwards Yue smiled. They go back to his home together. While he said that she had smiled like a blooming flower. She was happy from the bottom of her hearth.

If you think of it, when Hajime saw that for the first time, he was probably done in.

Also, the oath was set on the day of departure after passing life or death situations and stepping into the world. They vow to protect each other, defeat everything that stands in their way and go to Hajime's hometown together.

His instincts tell him that. Immediately before he his consciousness fades he remembers the important oath embraces himself and “Something about seeing Yue” and stands up.

(…..Ideal Lover? Sweet, gentle world? I’m stupid (□□□)!)

Hajime covered his eyes and gritted his teeth to the very limit. If he did not do so, he wouldn’t be able to forgive himself. (TL: He would start crying.)

(…..I forgot the promise. Was almost blinded by this world. I’m disgusted about myself.)

Hajime hit his cheek with his full strength for punishment. Though Yue is surprised by the sudden action of Hajime and extents her hand,

Bashi!

It was deflected by Hajime’s hand.

Yue wraps her hand with her other hand with a sad expression. With the expression, which was probably produced in the great labyrinth, Hajime [….Don’t kid with me] spat out an abuse.

[……Hajime, what's wrong?]

Yue's question was disregarded and Hajime turned a sharp glance towards Yue like he was another person.

[Well, Yue. Yue is important for me. I don't need anything besides her.]

[…..Hajime, I am happy.]

Though Yue is confused by Hajime's sudden words, her expression softens up immediately. However, contrary to the words, Hajime's gaze remains sharp.

[That why, If I tell you to cut down or cast away someone else, will you do it?]

[If Hajime really wishes for that.]

Yue nods to Hajimes words without hesitation.

[Even if it were Shia, Kaori, Tio or even Myuu?]

[If Hajime wishes for that.]

Almost like embodying Hajime's ideal Yue and carrying out all of Hajimes wishes. To such a girlfriend, rather than being happy about it, he shows an irritated expression. He mutters in a small voice [I was drawn in by that, impossible…..]

And, with a sharp glance he spits out words.

[Is that so…..I understand, bastard.]

In the moment when he declared Yue as an imitation, Hajime's appearance changed. From the appearance of a japanese with black hair, to a boy with gray hair and an eyepatch.

[Crap. I really fell into the trap just like that…..That's why you shouldn't be careless in a great labyrinth……Better said, the one who created Haltina is one of a fella.] (TL: Just checked, "Haltina" should be read "Harz"-ina (Harutsuina) which means "amber", but i'll leave it Haltina as it was used in earlier chapers)

Yue walks up to the cursing Hajime. And she reaches out to Hajime with a clinging expression.

[…..Stay here? If Hajime stays here he will be happy.]

[Shut up, fake. Don't call my name so familiarly.]

[…..Why? I'm Yue. Hajime's lover. Ideal lover. With what are you dissatisfied.]

[With everything you idiot. Doing everything I want, monopolizing me, my ideal lover? That's only a doll. I don't have the hobby of playing with dolls.]

Hajime wants to get out of this space already and spits out to Yue that she's a fake.

[…..Wrong. I'm not a doll. I have all the personality of Hajime's ideal lover. That's why, stay here. Everything that Hajime wants will be like his ideal. I'll always stay by his side.]

Apparently, it doesn't seem to be an ordinary fake. The world was also produced by the memory and also the characters were read with the transition/teleportation. There, IF there would be something more impossible "Maybe, if it's that way"-created, an even more ideal world would be created.

Certainly, with the pain tasted in hell, and with what may stand before them in the future, that it would be ideal to live with Yue and the other in the peaceful Japan.

However,

[It's beyond help. It couldn't be even more wrong.]

Hajime says it like it was like a trivial matter! A red light emits from his body. The clear red magic is spread though the world in a moment and isn't stopping and raising its density by a dreadful amount.

As long as this is a trial, when clearing the conditions, it is possible to escape it, but he can't help it and uses his whole strength. The point is, he's venting his anger.

[…….Why?]

It should be his ideal word, so Yue asks Hajime why he's rejecting it. Hajime continues to discharge his magic power and turns his glare to the fake.

[Don't "Why?"-shit me. It's a simple story. My ideal Yue is not such garbage. This real one exceeds my ideals by far. The real Yue is more attractive than a Yue which doesn't exist!]

Hajime pours out magic to the very limit and remembers the worthless feeling again, lets out a loud roar and pours even more magic out and the space finally begins to crack.

While the worlds cracking it make a "bikibeki"-sound and expands a bit, however the magic is not strong enough and it's already exhausted. However, there is still a stupid method left as he doesn't want to yield to this space. That's because he's pretty stubborn.

Hajime takes out a magic stone out from his stock and uses “Limit Break”. He raised his magic power in one go.

[Those guys are always like this. They always trample on my ideals and try to end them! To tie us with them! Strongly! It won’t go like those troublesome guys want to! Still, for this reason, I will be the strongest!]

The world is dyed crimson red. Like piercing the heavens, a bright red torrent bursts out.

And,

Bariiiiiiiiiin!!

The world was broken.

Fragments of the world are fluttered like glass in the air. It shines like diamond dust.

At the end of its life, like sparking, the imitation Yue lets out a smile in the broken world. It wasn’t like Yue’s smile. It was like….. someone else’s smile.

Hajime had an idea what that was, however his consciousness

began to fade rapidly and he wasn't able to point that out.

[……You passed. With only being nice you don't stand a chance. There is no sense in only giving. Even if it's hard or painful, only what was piled up in reality can make you happy. Don't forget that.]

It was a voice different from Yue's. It's more manly than feminine. However, it was a very gentle voice.

Hajime at the end of his consciousness cannot help it and raises his voice.

[None of your bussiness…..But, I'll remember it.]

The person was already hard to see, nonetheless still raised a gentle smile at the end…..it felt just like that.